浮世艶草子

～うきよつやぞうし～

八月薫
◆篁千夏

3

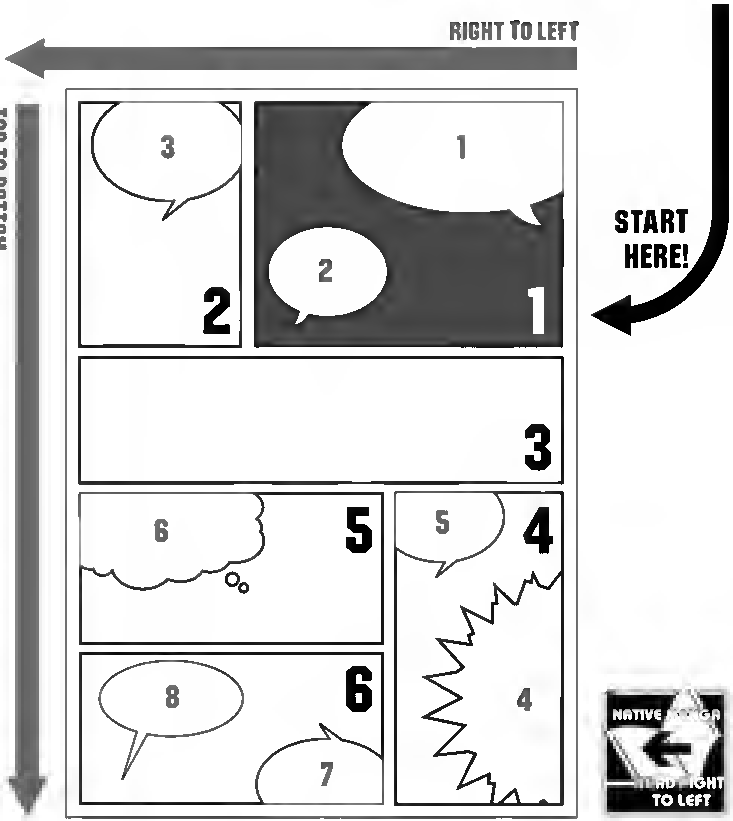
AMOROUS WOMEN OF THE FLOATING WORLD: SEX IN OLD TOKYO VOL. 3

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

SPコミックス

THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL IS READ IN ITS NATIVE FORMAT

READ EACH PANEL FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM SEE HOW IT'S DONE BELOW!



浮世艶草子

3

原作 篁千夏
八月薫

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月刊「コミック乱」連載作品

SASAYA KIYOHANA-OIRAN LIVED DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE EDO PERIOD SHE GOT HER START AT THE SHACKS ON THE WEST BANK OF THE EDO RIVER.
BAKUHAN!
ON THE WEST BANK ARE LOW-QUALITY BROTHELS CALLED KOGOUSHI WHERE SHE PICKED UP CLIENTS FOR A FEW HUNDRED MON.
JINGLE

[1] OIRAN IS A TITLE FOR A COURTESAN

WHILE KIYOHANA BEGAN HER CAREER IN A SMALLER BROTHEL, SHE LATER MOVED TO A LARGER ONE, WHERE HER POPULARITY GREW.
第十七話
花に蝶
CHAPTER 17:
A BUTTERFLY FOR A FLOWER

IN MANY WAYS, KIYOHANA-OIRAN WAS A WOMAN WHO EMBODIED THE FLAIR AND ENERGY OF EDO.

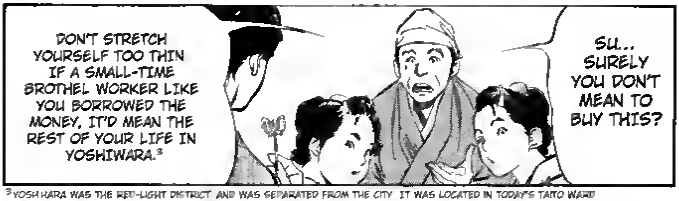
— 3 YEARS AGO...
AAAH....
ZENKICHI-SAN..
THERE...
YES, OH, THERE...
YOU FEEL SO GOOD, KIYOHANA
...I'M KIDDING, I CAN'T COME BACK FOR 10 DAYS.
TOMOR-ROW, OF COURSE!
WHEN WILL YOU COME SEE ME NEXT, ZENKICHI-SAN?
OO!
AH!
OH, RIGHT! HERE...
HEH HEH!
YES...I'LL WAIT. SO YOU'D BETTER NOT CHEAT ON ME WITH SOMEONE ELSE!

EVEN IF IT WERE A KANZASHI MADE FROM A SOBA SHOP'S DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS, I'D BE HAPPY BECAUSE YOU GAVE IT TO ME.
AS I THOUGHT, IT LOOKS GREAT ON YOU.
THIS IS FOR ME? I'M SO HAPPY!
NO.
IT WAS CHEAP, BUT I REALLY LIKED THE COLOR, SO...
IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME THAT YOU THINK SO.
OTHER MEN MUST BE BLIND. YOU HAVE ALL THE QUALITIES TO BE A TAYUU[2] AT A HIGH-LEVEL PLACE.
...OK
KIYOHANA
YA CAN'T BACK DOWN LIKE THAT
IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE WORTH SOMETHING, NO ONE ELSE WILL, EITHER

[2] TAYUU= A TOP CLASS COURTESAN

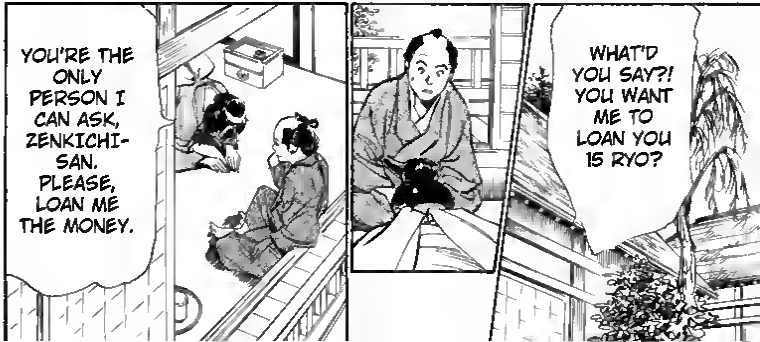
PEDDLER, HOW MUCH FOR THIS KANZASHI?
THREE BU, BUT IF YOU BUY TWO, I'LL LET YOU HAVE THEM BOTH FOR ONE RYO.
ONE RYO
THAT'S A LITTLE EXPENSIVE
.....
YOU HAVE TO SPEND MONEY TO EARN MONEY.
HMMMMM
I'M TORN...
THIS PLUM BLOSSOM AND BIRD KANZASHI IS INEXPENSIVE, BUT GOOD QUALITY.
OH, PEDDLER, ARE YOU CARRYING ANY KANZASHI MADE FROM TORTOISE-SHELL?
LET'S SEE...
HOW ABOUT THIS?
!
SHHF
OH...

A LOWER-CLASS PROSTITUTE COULDN'T AFFORD IT...
THAT'S THE WORK OF A MASTER ARTISAN.
WHAT BEAUTIFUL TORTOISE SHELL..
WHAT A TAYUU WOULD WEAR...
HOW-EVER, THAT'S
OH, I'M SORRY I OFFENDED YOU. BUT...
EXACTLY HOW MUCH IS IT?!
WE CAN'T PRETEND WE DIDN'T HEAR THAT!
UM, PEDDLER?
YES? WHAT IS IT?
THA... THAT'S JUST WAY TOO MUCH.
WHAA?!
....IT COSTS OVER 15 RYO, YOU SEE?
SEE?
YOU'RE RIGHT... THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD AFFORD THAT


DON'T STRETCH YOURSELF TOO THIN IF A SMALL-TIME BROTHEL WORKER LIKE YOU BORROWED THE MONEY, IT'D MEAN THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN YOSHIWARA.[3]
SU... SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN TO BUY THIS?

[3] YOSHIWARA WAS THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT AND WAS SEPARATED FROM THE CITY. IT WAS LOCATED IN TODAY'S TAITO WARD.

YES....
YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT...
YOU JOB IS TO MAKE MONEY BY SELLING ACCESSORIES, RIGHT? NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE FATE OF ONE LOWLY WHORE, RIGHT?

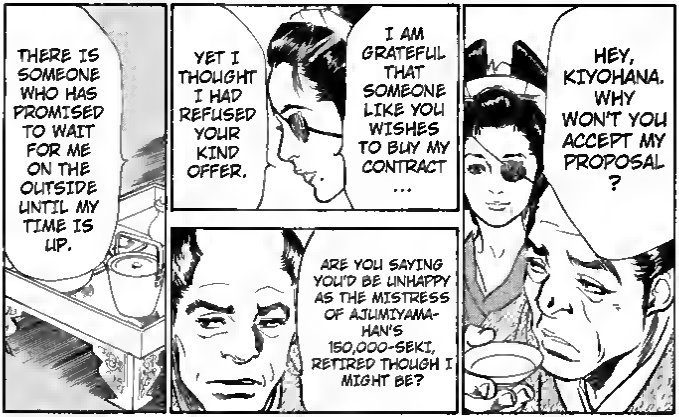


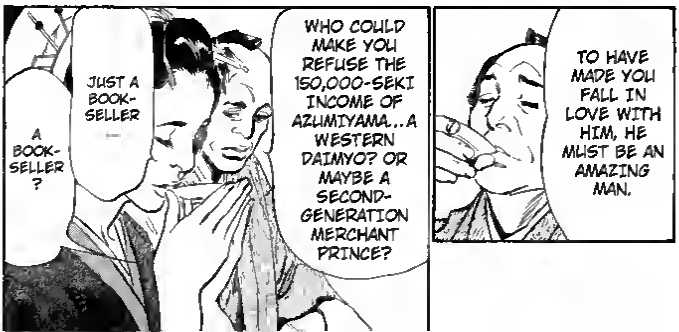
I DID SAY THAT, BUT... FINE, LET'S SAY YOU BUY THE KANZASHI, THEN WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, ZENKICHI-SAN IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE WORTH SOMETHING, NO ONE ELSE WILL, EITHER.
BUT.. IS RYO IS A FORTUNE, YOU KNOW?
YOU REALLY WANT THIS TORTOISE -SHELL KANZASHI THAT MUCH?
IT JUST MAKES ME SO ANGRY-- SAYING THAT THERE'S NO WAY A LOW-CLASS BROTHEL WOMAN WOULD STAND A CHANCE.
I'M GOING TO....
LIMHM, LIMHM .....
WHAT ?!
DO YOU THINK IT'S SILLY?
NOO... IT'S.. INCREDIBLE!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL GET YOU THE MONEY SOMEHOW, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
THANK YOU, ZENKICHI -SAN.

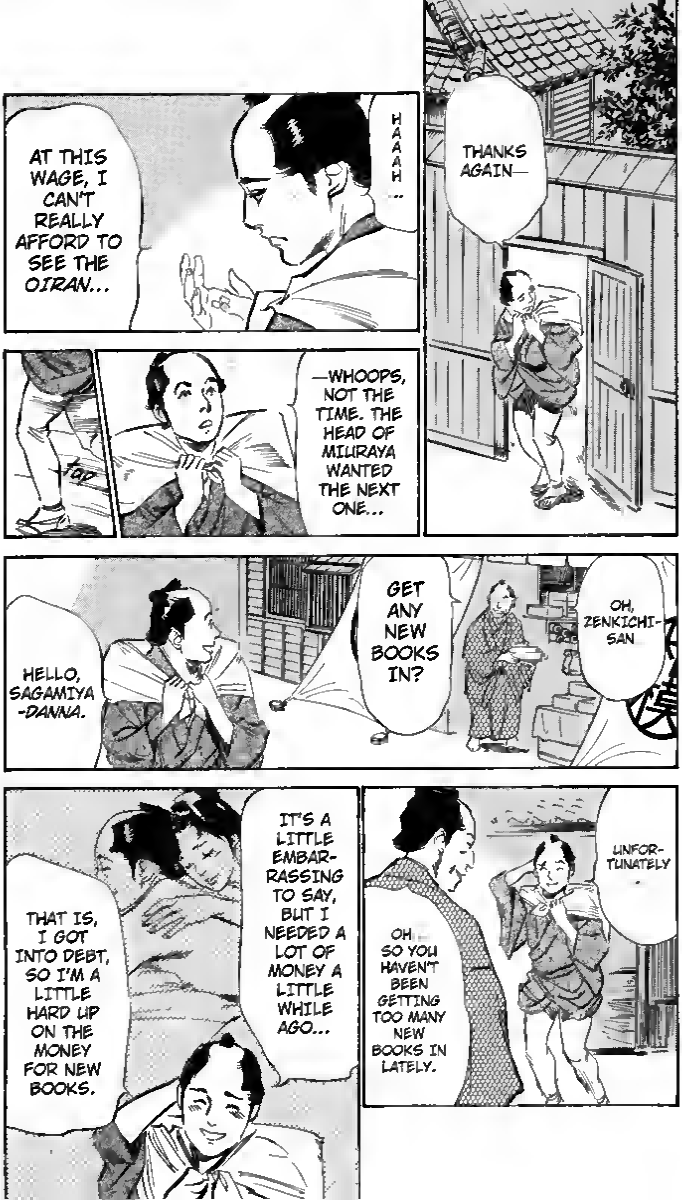
THANK YOU FOR KEEPING YOUR PROMISE
HERE, I'VE BROUGHT THE KANZASHI AS PROMISED, WITHOUT SELLING IT TO SOMEONE ELSE
RIGHT, RIGHT
SO, THEN.. ER..
ONE TWO.
CHOMP
BUT IF YOU WEAR THAT KANZASHI, I'M SURE YOUR REGULARS WILL BE OVERJOYED
SO YOU MANAGED TO SCRAPE IT TOGETHER
HERE IS THE 15 RYO I OWE.
ギギギ CREE CREE...
HEY LADY!
WHAT ON EARTH DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOIN.
SCREEE...
?!

AS YOU SEE, EVEN A SMALL-TIME WHORE ...
CAN MANAGE IT.
NO!
I APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT I SAID BEFORE! PLEASE, FORGIVE ME!
I'M SORRY AS WELL .. RUINING SUCH A BEAUTIFUL KANZASHI...
AH...
NEWS OF THE INCIDENT SPREAD QUICKLY IN RUMOR-HUNGRY EDO, AND KIYOHANA'S FAME INCREASED.
HUH ?
WELL, A PEDDLER HAS HIS PRIDE TOO. LET'S PUT THIS KANZASHI TO WORK ONE MORE TIME.

A BEAUTY FROM THE START, SHE MOVED FROM SMALL-TIME TO PRIME TIME, QUICKLY CLIMBING THE LADDER UNTIL SHE ROSE TO TAYUU.
JANGLE JANGLE
THE PEDDLER TURNED THE BROKEN KANZASHI INTO AN EYEPATCH AND GAVE IT TO KIYOHANA. THIS BECAME KNOWN AS "GIVING BUTTERFLIES TO FLOWERS" SINCE HER NAME MEANT "PURE FLOWER."
....
THAT'S CLASS, DAMMIT ....
THAT'S THE 15 RYO BUTTERFLY, HUH...


HEY, KIYOHANA. WHY WON'T YOU ACCEPT MY PROPOSAL?
I AM GRATEFUL THAT SOMEONE LIKE YOU WISHES TO BUY MY CONTRACT ...
YET I THOUGHT I HAD REFUSED YOUR KIND OFFER.
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO HAS PROMISED TO WAIT FOR ME ON THE OUTSIDE UNTIL MY TIME IS UP.
ARE YOU SAYING YOU'D BE UNHAPPY AS THE MISTRESS OF AJUMIYAMA-HAN'S 150,000-SEKI, RETIRED THOUGH I MIGHT BE?

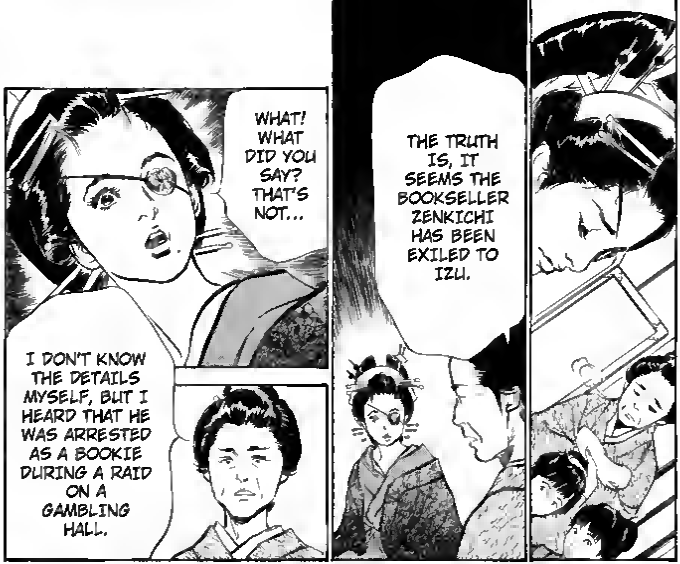

TO HAVE MADE YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM, HE MUST BE AN AMAZING MAN.
WHO COULD MAKE YOU REFUSE THE 150,000-SEKI INCOME OF AZUMIYAMA...A WESTERN DAIMYO? OR MAYBE A SECOND-GENERATION MERCHANT PRINCE?
JUST A BOOK-SELLER ...
A BOOK-SELLER?

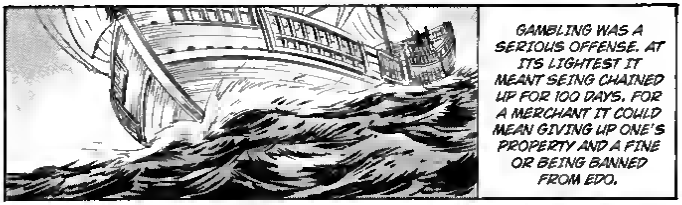

THANKS AGAIN—
HAAAH...
AT THIS WAGE, I CAN'T REALLY AFFORD TO SEE THE OIRAN...
—WHOOPS, NOT THE TIME. THE HEAD OF MIURAYA WANTED THE NEXT ONE...
OH, ZENKICHI-SAN
GET ANY NEW BOOKS IN?
HELLO, SAGAMIYA-DANNA.
UNFORTUNATELY
OH— SO YOU HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING TOO MANY NEW BOOKS IN LATELY.
IT'S A LITTLE EMBARRASSING TO SAY, BUT I NEEDED A LOT OF MONEY A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
THAT IS, I GOT INTO DEBT, SO I'M A LITTLE HARD UP ON THE MONEY FOR NEW BOOKS.

YES, PLEASE!
HUH?
SHALL I TELL YOU A WAY TO MAKE MONEY FAST?
WHAT'D YOU DO, GIVE IT TO A WOMAN?
YES, WELL... SOMETHING LIKE THAT..
UHH.. YOU MEAN GAMBLING?
YOU KNOW, "SHAKE SHAKE CLATTER?"
BECOME A BOOKIE FOR THIS...
SO ACT AS A.. FALL GUY?
SHHHHHH——!!
AND THAT'S IT... SEE?
SEE, A FRIEND OF MINE RUNS A GAME.
BUT THE EMPEROR'S BEEN CRACKING DOWN LATELY...

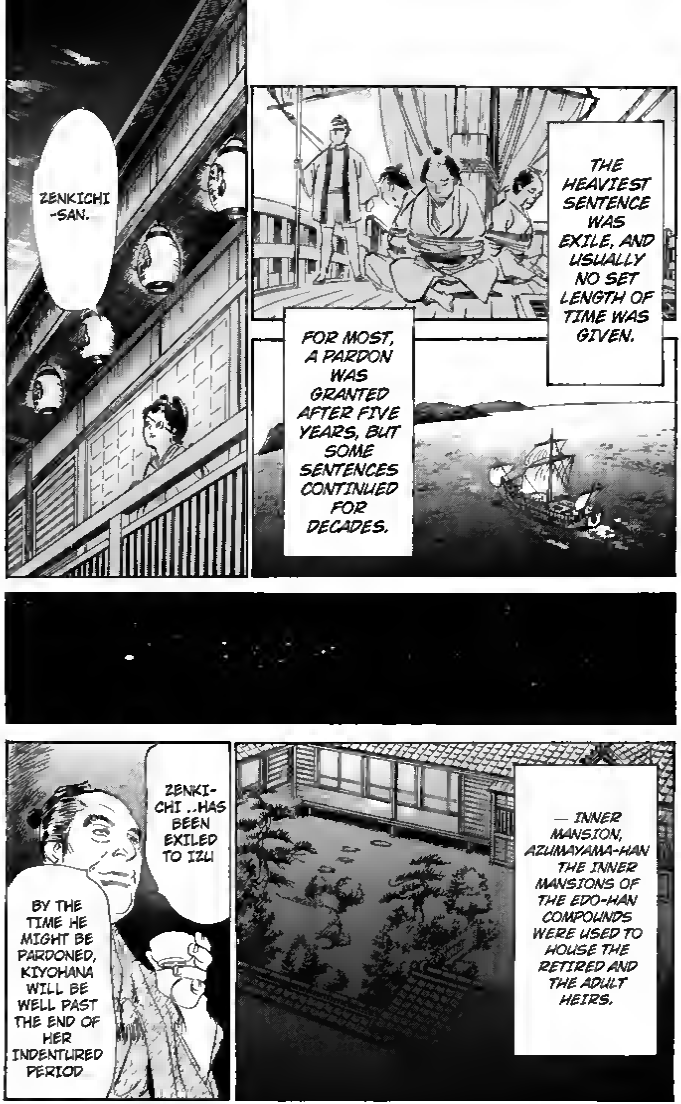
50 RYO ?!
BUT ONE TIME PAYS 2 RYO. YOU COULD MAKE 50 RYO IN A YEAR.
THEY NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN STAND IN FOR THE BOOKIE IN CASE THEY GET CAUGHT.
HMM ...
"ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER," AS THEY SAY.
KIYO-HANA,
YOU'RE SIGHING AN AWFUL LOT.
OIRAN, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE BOOK-SELLER ZENKICHI?

EVEN WHEN YOU ROSE TO THE MIDDLE-LEVELS, HE MANAGED TO COME ONCE A MONTH, BUT...
A BOOKSELLER TRYING TO BUY A TAYUU, THAT'S TOUGH.. RIGHT?
IF IT'S THE FEE, THEN I'D BE WILLING TO PAY—
OIRAN, DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA!
MEN HAVE A THING CALLED PRIDE!
EVEN IF IT MEANT DEATH, YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO USE YOUR OWN MONEY— ESPECIALLY BECAUSE YOU HAVE COME UP IN THE WORLD
OR IS THE MAN YOU'VE FALLEN FOR SOME KIND OF CHEAP HOODLUM WHO'D BE OKAY WITH YOU PICKING UP THE TAB?
DIDN'T HE TELL YOU THAT THE 15 RYO FOR THE KANZASHI WAS A PRESENT?
THAT'S CLASS. HE'S A REAL MAN SO DON'T YOU GO DOING ANYTHING UNCOUTH EITHER, OIRAN .
I KNOW, BUT... I WANT TO SEE HIM YOU'RE A WOMAN, YOU UNDER-STAND.


WHAT! WHAT DID YOU SAY? THAT'S NOT...
I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS MYSELF, BUT I HEARD THAT HE WAS ARRESTED AS A BOOKIE DURING A RAID ON A GAMBLING HALL.
THE TRUTH IS, IT SEEMS THE BOOKSELLER ZENKICHI HAS BEEN EXILED TO IZU.


GAMBLING WAS A SERIOUS OFFENSE. AT ITS LIGHTEST IT MEANT SEING CHAINED UP FOR 100 DAYS. FOR A MERCHANT IT COULD MEAN GIVING UP ONE'S PROPERTY AND A FINE OR BEING BANNED FROM EDO.

WHY?
NO ...
CAN YOU WAIT THAT LONG, OIRAN ?
EVEN WITH A PARDON HE'LL BE OUT IN FIVE YEARS AT THE EARLIEST.

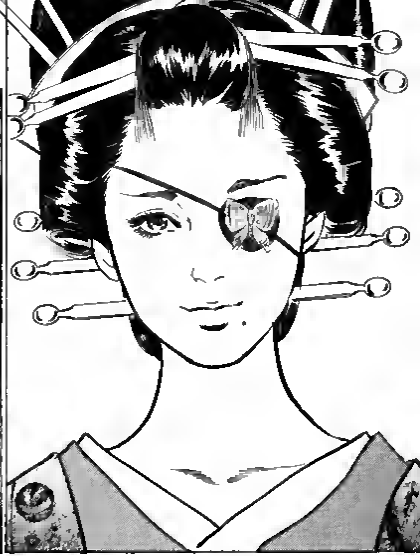

ZENKICHI -SAN.
THE HEAVIEST SENTENCE WAS EXILE, AND USUALLY NO SET LENGTH OF TIME WAS GIVEN.
FOR MOST, A PARDON WAS GRANTED AFTER FIVE YEARS, BUT SOME SENTENCES CONTINUED FOR DECADES.
ZENKI-CHI ..HAS BEEN EXILED TO IZU
BY THE TIME HE MIGHT BE PARDONED, KIYOHANA WILL BE WELL PAST THE END OF HER INDENTURED PERIOD
— INNER MANSION, AZUMAYAMA-HAN THE INNER MANSIONS OF THE EDO-HAN COMPOUNDS WERE USED TO HOUSE THE RETIRED AND THE ADULT HEIRS.

AND DUE TO IGNORANCE OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE, MANY OF THEM STAYED ON AS MADAMS AFTER THEIR CONTRACTS ENDED.
THE LADIES OF YOSHIWARA RETIRED AT 27. ONLY THE CONTRACTS OF A HANDFUL WERE EVER PAID OFF BEFORE THAT TIME.
AND BY THEN, EVEN KIYOHANA WILL HAVE GIVEN UP, AND HER ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL TO BECOME YOUR GRACE'S MISTRESS WILL BE A SURE THING.
DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF OVER IT— WE DIDN'T TELL THE POLICE ANYTHING THE RAID WAS A COINCIDENCE
THE METHOD WAS A LITTLE ROUGH...BUT AFTER THE TAYUU ACCEPTS, I'LL IMMEDIATELY REQUEST THAT THE SHOGUN'S COUNCIL PARDON ZENKICHI
FOR YOUR GRACE, HAVING KIYOHANA BY YOUR SIDE WILL BRING YOU HAPPINESS. FOR KIYOHANA, LIVING IN LUXURY WILL BRING HER HAPPINESS.
YOU SAY THAT, BUT THE OFFER TO ZENKICHI WAS MADE KNOWING THAT THE POLICE WERE CRACKING DOWN ON THE HALLS.
YES. I'LL THINK ABOUT IT THAT WAY.
AS FOR ZENKICHI, SO LONG AS HE IS PARDONED AND GIVEN THE 50 RYO AS A PAY OFF, THAT WILL BRING HIM HAPPINESS.

WHA...?!
YOU.... REFUSE?

THE MAN THAT I FELL IN LOVE WITH WAS...
THE MAN WHO SCROUNGED UP IS RYO OUT OF NOTHING FOR A THIRD-CLASS WHORE!
BUT I HEARD THAT HE'S BEEN EXILED TO IZU FOR GAMBLING.
AT THE EARLIEST, A PARDON WILL TAKE FIVE YEARS—
THREE YEARS AFTER YOUR CONTRACT ENDS. AND IT COULD TAKE AS LONG AS 10.
WILL YOU STILL WAIT?

HM
I SEE
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT I WON'T TRY TO FORCE YOU ANYMORE.



I AM INDEBTED TO YOU.

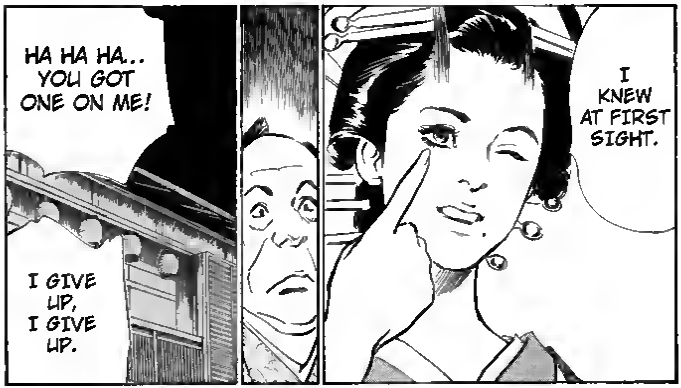
OH, NOTHING. JUST TALKING TO MYSELF.

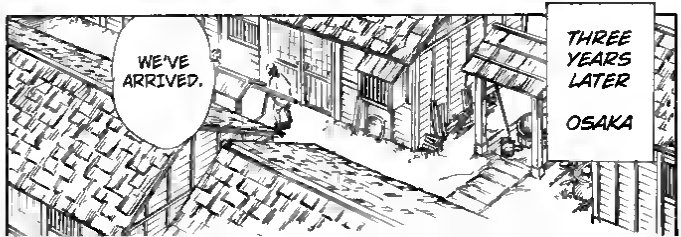
BUT YOU KNOW, KIYOHANA

EX-CUSE ME?
I CAN'T STAND UP TO THE EYES OF A WOMAN IN LOVE.
I GUESS I COULD SPEED UP THE REQUEST TO THE COUNCIL FOR A PARDON..

I KNOW YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT ZENKICHI, BUT DID YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT MAN? EH?
ALL YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH ARE MEN WHO COME TO THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT TO BUY A WOMAN, RIGHT?

BREATH—


HA HA HA... YOU GOT ONE ON ME!
I GIVE UP, I GIVE UP.
I KNEW AT FIRST SIGHT.


WE'VE ARRIVED.
THREE YEARS LATER
OSAKA

KNOCK KNOCK
HEY ZENKICHI! YA HOME?
THERE'S NO MISTAKE. THIS IS THE BOOKSELLER ZENKICHI'S HOUSE
YA HAVE A GUEST. AND IT'S A WOMAN!
AH— WHO IS IT?
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAME! HURRY UP AND GET OUT HERE!
WHAT KIND OF WOMAN WOULD COME TO THESE SLUMS— A LOAN COLLECTOR? I THOUGHT I'D PAID MY BILL.
WHAT'RE YA TALKIN' 'BOUT?

"A BUTTERFLY FOR A FLOWER" .THE END

第十八話
腎張腎虚
CHAPTER 18
JINBARI JINKYO

HAHAHA
PLUNK
PLUNK

THINK
WHOO

WOO-HAHA
HERE.. HAVE ANOTHER CUP.

NO STANDING ON CEREMONY TONIGHT. LET'S EAT, DRINK AND ENJOY OURSELVES!
HICCUP
AH- TONIGHT IS A CELEBRA- TION FOR MYSELF.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
CONGRA-TULATIONS!
SWISH
TO CELEBRATE YOUR PROMOTION, WE HAVE PREPARED A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOU
?!
A SPECIALLY ORDERED 1 SHO GLASS.
* 1 SHO = ABOUT 1.8 LITERS
EVEN IF IT IS A.. A PRESENT, ASKING ME TO CHUG THIS... ISN'T IT A BIT BIG?
PLOP
CHUG FOR US!
ARE YOU SAYING YOU WONT ACCEPT OUR CELEBRATORY DRINK?
WHAAAT ?

HE'S FINALLY BRIBED ENOUGH PEOPLE TO GET PROMOTED, AND NOW...
HE WON'T ACCEPT A DRINK FROM US UNDERLINGS ANYMORE!
SO, IT'S EQUALITY IN NAME ONLY TONIGHT.
DO YOU HAVE TWO TONGUES, TOO?
...
HMPH ...SO THAT'S HOW IT IS...
HICCUP
HERE! ONE ON ME!
SPLASH
KYA~
WHAT COULD BE MORE INSOLENT THAN PEASANTS BEING JEALOUS OF ANOTHER MAN'S SUCCESS?
HICCUP
KUKU ...
YOU'RE THE INSOLENT ONE!

THE JOB OF A SAMURAI WAS EASY— FOR INSTANCE, A LOW-RANKED SAMURAI MIGHT ONLY HAVE TO WORK THREE DAYS A MONTH.
MANY SAMURAI DIED DURING THE EDO PERIOD DUE TO ALCOHOL POISONING— IN OTHER WORDS, LIVER FAILURE CAUSED BY CONSUMING LARGE AMOUNTS OF ALCOHOL.
DUE TO THE LACK OF OTHER ENTERTAINMENT AT THIS TIME, IT IS NO WONDER THAT THEY DROWNED THEMSELVES WITH ALCOHOL
ALL OF YOU DIE!
UEGH—
THERE ARE ALSO MANY CASES RECORDED OF KNIFE WOUNDS DUE TO INEBRIATION.

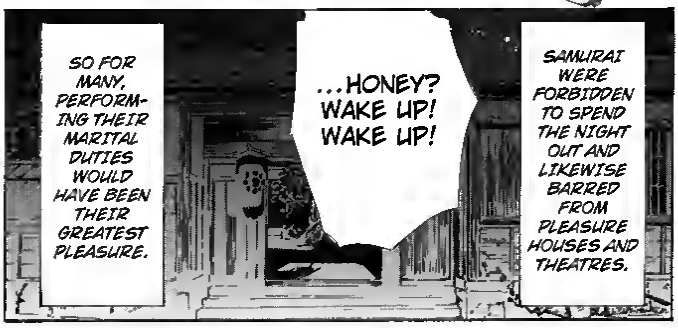
THE OWARI-HAN, THE FIRST OF THE THREE FAMILIES*, EVEN ALLOWED DRINKING ON THE JOB, SO YOU CAN IMAGINE WHAT THE REST WERE LIKE.
PHEW—
SWISH

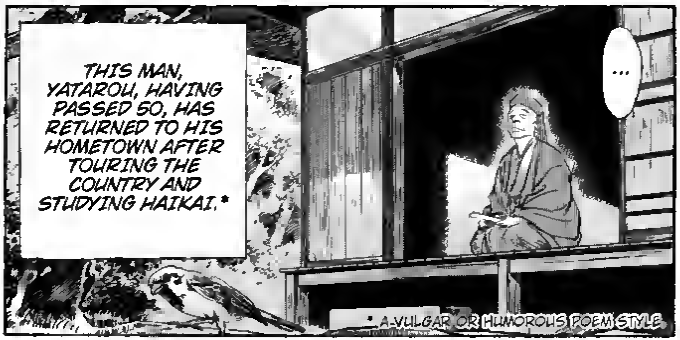
*THE THREE FAMILIES REFERS TO THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE TOKUGAWA HOUSE: OWARI, MITO AND KISHU.

HAA
HAA
HAAH
AHH!
OOGH...
AH,
AAH!
AH ...!
PLEASE, NO MORE! THE CHILDREN WILL HEAR.
ANOTHER CAUSE OF DEATH ..
IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR BEING SO LUSCIOUS ...
WE'VE ALREADY DONE IT TWICE... ARE YOU STILL NOT SATISFIED ?
slurp
slip

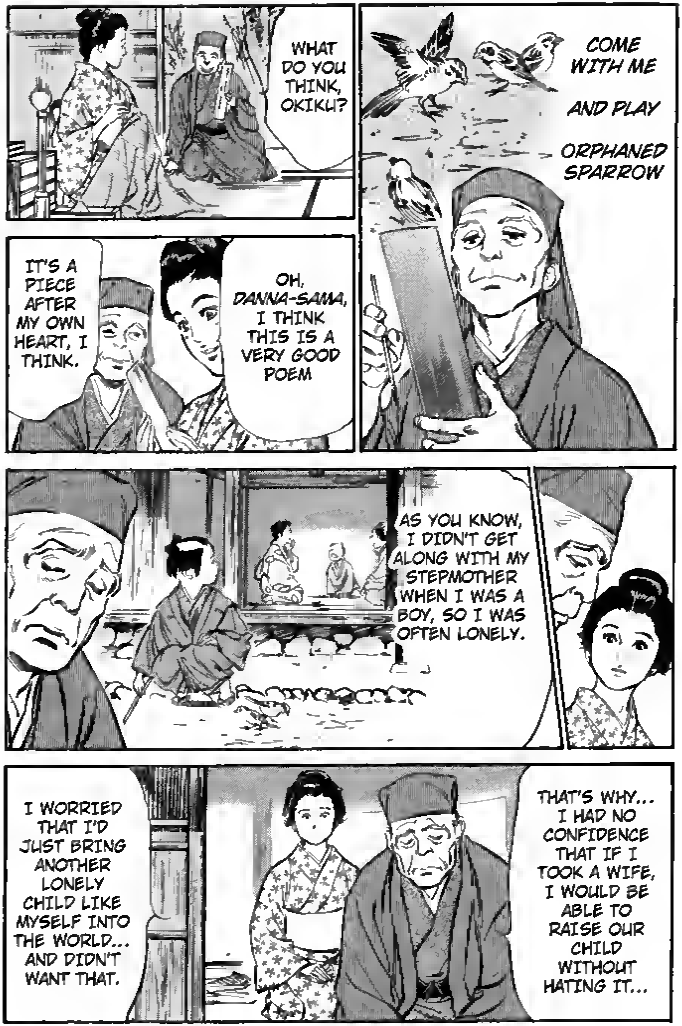
HAA..
HAA ...
THUMP
WAS REPORTEDLY JINKYO.

"JINKYO": WHEN THE LIFE FORCE OF THE BODY IS DEPLETED DUE TO EXCESSIVE INTERCOURSE. DEATH FOLLOWS.
.....
OOH!
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, IF YOU KEEP THIS UP, MY BODY WON'T LAST!
THUD
?!

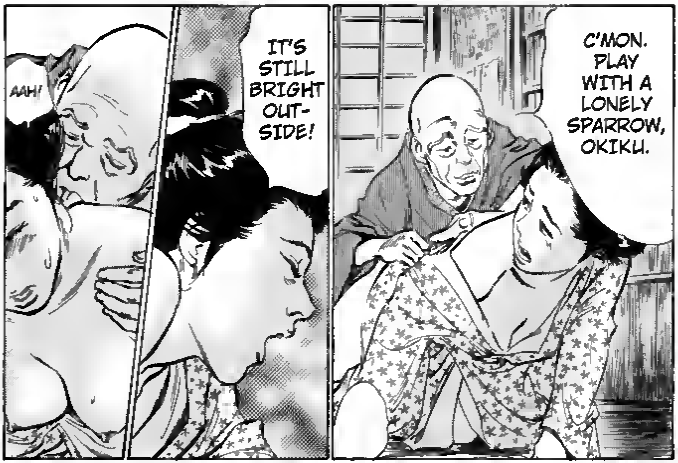

SO FOR MANY, PERFORM-ING THEIR MARITAL DUTIES WOULD HAVE BEEN THEIR GREATEST PLEASURE.
...HONEY? WAKE UP! WAKE UP!
SAMURAI WERE FORBIDDEN TO SPEND THE NIGHT OUT AND LIKEWISE BARRED FROM PLEASURE HOUSES AND THEATRES.


THIS MAN, YATAROU, HAVING PASSED 50, HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOMETOWN AFTER TOURING THE COUNTRY AND STUDYING HAIKAI.*
...
* A VULGAR OR HUMOROUS POEM STYLE

FINISHED ...
PI/P
CHIRP CHIRP


WHAT DO YOU THINK, OKIKU?
COME WITH ME AND PLAY ORPHANED SPARROW
OH, DANNA-SAMA, I THINK THIS IS A VERY GOOD POEM
IT'S A PIECE AFTER MY OWN HEART, I THINK.
AS YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH MY STEPMOTHER WHEN I WAS A BOY, SO I WAS OFTEN LONELY.
THAT'S WHY... I HAD NO CONFIDENCE THAT IF I TOOK A WIFE, I WOULD BE ABLE TO RAISE OUR CHILD WITHOUT HATING IT...
I WORRIED THAT I'D JUST BRING ANOTHER LONELY CHILD LIKE MYSELF INTO THE WORLD... AND DIDN'T WANT THAT.

—BUT NOW, I WANT A CHILD OF MY OWN MORE THAN ANYTHING ...OKIKU ...
CLASP
YES.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU WERE SINGLE UNTIL YOU REACHED FIFTY AND MARRIED ME.
SHOO
...
...
WE'RE HUSBAND AND WIFE. IT'S ONLY NATURAL.
A... GAIN?
SNICK
BUT LAST NIGHT WE DID IT THREE TIMES..


C'MON. PLAY WITH A LONELY SPARROW, OKIKU.
IT'S STILL BRIGHT OUT-SIDE!
AAH!

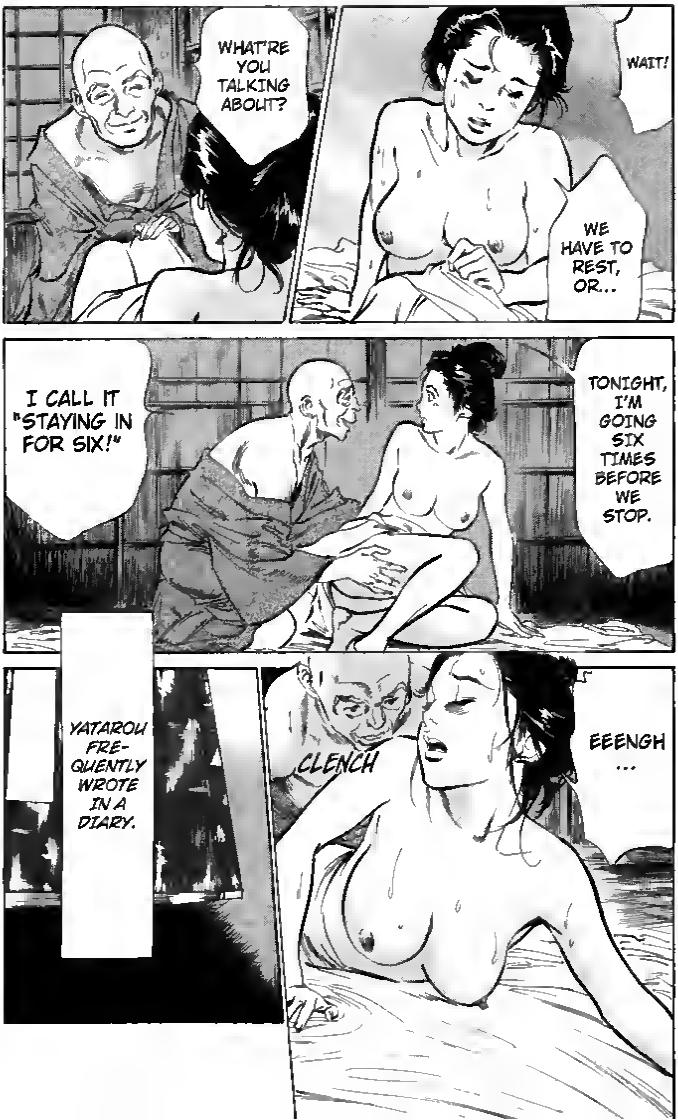
"WITHIN THE MOUNTAINS, SPRING FINALLY HAS COME. AND THEN SPRING'S TWILIGHT," THEY SAY...
SPRING DAYS ARE STILL SHORT.
OH... FINE.

OOH ...
SQUEEZE
AH!
AH ...!
MM ...AA!

'JINBARI' MEANS OVERFLOWING WITH SEXUAL ENERGY EVEN AFTER PERFORMING EXTRA-ORDINARY FEATS OF SEX. ONE'S MANHOOD DOES NOT FALTER.
SLIDE
あああ
AHHHHH-
GRAB

THRUST
GASP!
IT SEEMS THAT YATAROU, AS IF TO MAKE UP FOR HIS LATE MARRIAGE, TOOK HIS DUTIES QUITE SERIOUSLY.

NO MORE ...
MMM, I CAN'T GET ENOUGH ...
NNAAA ...
MORE!
HNNH ..
ZU
ZU
OOH!
SHUDDER
AAH—


WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WAIT!
WE HAVE TO REST, OR...
I CALL IT "STAYING IN FOR SIX!"
TONIGHT, I'M GOING SIX TIMES BEFORE WE STOP.
YATAROU FRE-QUENTLY WROTE IN A DIARY.
CLENCH
EEENGH ...

HE CALLED IT THE "SHICHI-BAN NIKKI," AND INSIDE IT WERE ENTRIES LIKE THESE:
8TH - SUNNY. EVENING RAINY. OKIKU CAME HOME. NIGHT, 5 TIMES.
11TH - SUNNY. THUNDERSTORM AT NIGHT. NIGHT, 3 TIMES.
15TH - SUNNY WENT MOON-VIEWING. NIGHT, 3 TIMES.
16TH - SUNNY. TOLD HAKUHI WE WOULDN'T BE GOING TO THE BATHS, 3 TIMES.
17TH - SUNNY. WENT TO THE CEMETERY. NIGHT, 3 TIMES.

BY TIMES, HE MEANT THE NIGHTLY SEX COUNT. IN A TIME WHEN LIFE EXPECTANCY WAS FAR SHORTER THAN IT IS NOW, AND DESPITE BEING IN HIS LATE FIFTIES, YATAROU HAD SEX NUMEROUS TIMES A DAY, DAY AFTER DAY.
AAAH
PLEASE— NO MORE!
AH!!!
SHUDDER
STILL GOOOING !!
HEY NOW

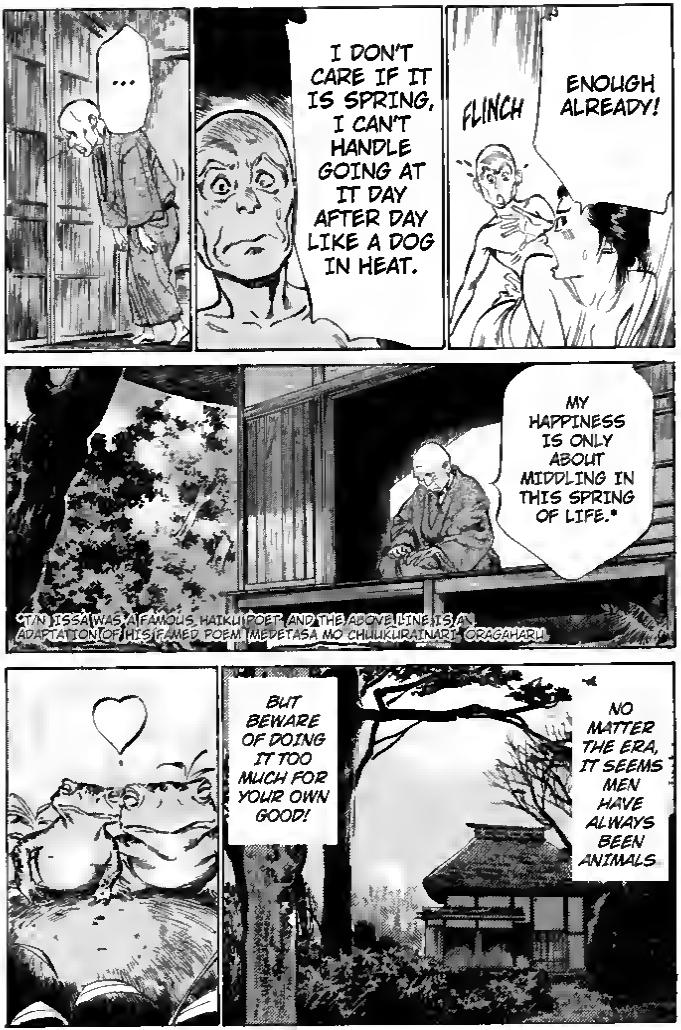
!
OH
...
MY, COMPARED TO THE FEMALE FROG, THE MALE IS AWFULLY SCRAWNY...

NOW OKIKU, YOU MUSTN'T LAUGH. THIS FROG IS DESPERATE TO LEAVE HIS SEED BEHIND.
WE CAN'T KNOW FOR SURE IF HE'S TRYING TO FATHER A CHILD OR SIMPLY A PERVERT...
C'MON. THERE! C'MON!
AND I WONDER IF SOMEONE ELSE ISN'T THE SAME.
TEEHEE

AH!

I WON'T LOSE TO A LITTLE FROG! HERE I... COME!!
AAH!
IT'S FINE IF YOU LOSE! IF YOU DON'T REST A LITTLE MORE, YOU'LL FALL TO JINKYO.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, JINKYO ?!
WITH THIS FLEABANE AND CRANESBILL TEA, I'LL NEVER FAIL!
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG

THIS YATA-ROU'S LAST NAME WAS KOBA-YASHI.
HEY NOW!
THUD
I CAN'T .. NO MORE ..
OKIKU!
HEY, OKIKU! YOU CAN'T COLLAPSE YET!
HEY, OKIKU... JUST ONCE MORE, OKAY?
HIS PEN NAME WAS ISSA. YES, HE WAS THE FAMED AUTHOR OF THE POEM ANTHOLOGY "ORAGA HARU," ISSA KOBAYASHI.


...
I DON'T CARE IF IT IS SPRING, I CAN'T HANDLE GOING AT IT DAY AFTER DAY LIKE A DOG IN HEAT.
FLINCH
ENOUGH ALREADY!
MY HAPPINESS IS ONLY ABOUT MIDDLING IN THIS SPRING OF LIFE.*
*T/N: ISSA WAS A FAMOUS HAIKU POET, AND THE ABOVE LINE IS AN ADAPTATION OF HIS FAMED POEM MEDETASA MO CHUUKURAINARI ORAGAHARU.
BUT BEWARE OF DOING IT TOO MUCH FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
NO MATTER THE ERA, IT SEEMS MEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ANIMALS.

<JINBARI JINKYO> THE END

CHAPTER 19: RED THREAD

KIMONOS
OI, SADA-KICHI! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
I TOLD YOU TO TAKE THOSE TO THE SECOND WAREHOUSE!
SORRY.

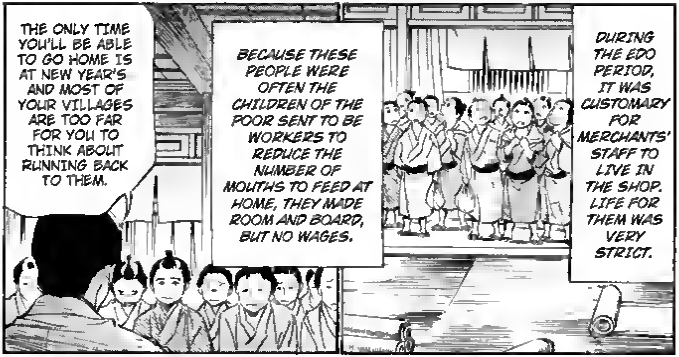
SAKICHI-SAN AT KAGAYA SAYS ..
SHHF SHHF
AFTER HE GOT THOSE SEVEN ITEMS FROM THE BROKERAGE IN YAICHI
THE MASTER TOLD HIM THE GRIP OF THE BIZEN OSAFUNE NORIMITSU WAS OLD SIAMESE SIENNA...
BUT HE SAYS THAT IT'S BOGWOOD, AND BECAUSE THE WOOD ISN'T WHAT HE WAS TOLD, HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO CANCEL...
IDIOT!
THAT'S THE YOKOYA-SOUMIN SHORT SWORD WITH SHEATH KNIFE.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE NONKO TEA BOWL OR THE GOLDEN BAMBOO FROM OUBOKUZAN OR THE VASE?
EXACTLY HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS? YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN A NEW HIRE
FORGIVE ME! I'LL TRY AGAIN!
YOU IDIOT! STUPID!
WORTH LESS
UWAAH—
BAM!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THE MERCHANDISE?! BE CAREFUL
YES, THANK YOU SIR.
ITO-HAN IS BACK! SOMEONE, FILL A BUCKET WITH WATER!

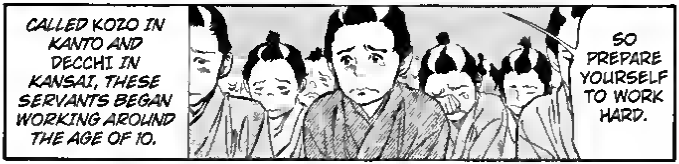
ITO-HAN[4] WELCOME HOME
BUN-SHICHI YOU'RE WORKING HARD
YOU KNOW, BUNSHICHI -HAN,
WATCHING THE NEW STAFF REMINDS ME OF THE PAST.
HAH— TODAY WAS ANOTHER LONG DAY.

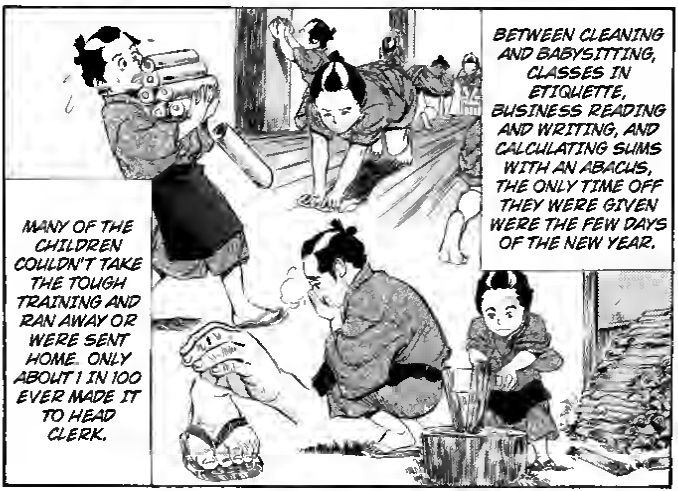
[4] ITO-HAN IS KANSAI-BEN FOR OJO-SAN OR YOUNG MISTRESS

JUMP
ALTHOUGH, THIS HASN'T GROWN MUCH AT ALL.
UWAAH— WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
MAKES ME FEEL STRANGE THAT WE LOOKED LIKE THAT ONCE.
A MAN'S ABILITY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH LENGTH OR THICKNESS.
YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO FIND A WIFE WITH SUCH A LITTLE ONE!
A POTATO. NO, IT'S ALMOST THE SIZE OF A DAIKON!
WA.. WOW!
THE ONLY THING AMAZING ABOUT THAT WORTHLESS YOSHIMATSU IS WHAT HE'S CARRYING
I MEAN, LOOK OVER THERE
ANYWAYS, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'LL GET WIVES BEFORE WE MAKE HEAD CLERK
AND THE EARLIEST THAT'LL BE IS AFTER WE'RE 30..
はははは HA HA HA HA
DON'T JUST STARE AT ME LIKE THAT!

[5] JAPANESE RADISH—LONGER THAN WESTERN RADISHES AND WHITE IN APPEARANCE


THE ONLY TIME YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GO HOME IS AT NEW YEAR'S AND MOST OF YOUR VILLAGES ARE TOO FAR FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT RUNNING BACK TO THEM.
BECAUSE THESE PEOPLE WERE OFTEN THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR SENT TO BE WORKERS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MOUTHS TO FEED AT HOME, THEY MADE ROOM AND BOARD, BUT NO WAGES.
DURING THE EDO PERIOD, IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR MERCHANTS' STAFF TO LIVE IN THE SHOP. LIFE FOR THEM WAS VERY STRICT.


CALLED KOZO IN KANTO AND DECCHI IN KANSAI, THESE SERVANTS BEGAN WORKING AROUND THE AGE OF 10.
SO PREPARE YOURSELF TO WORK HARD.


BETWEEN CLEANING AND BABYSITTING, CLASSES IN ETIQUETTE, BUSINESS READING AND WRITING, AND CALCULATING SUMS WITH AN ABACUS, THE ONLY TIME OFF THEY WERE GIVEN WERE THE FEW DAYS OF THE NEW YEAR.
MANY OF THE CHILDREN COULDN'T TAKE THE TOUGH TRAINING AND RAN AWAY OR WERE SENT HOME. ONLY ABOUT 1 IN 100 EVER MADE IT TO HEAD CLERK.

AHHH— THAT'S RIGHT.
ITO-HAN WAS KIND TO US BACK THEN.
HO—
IF YOU PUT THIS ON, IT WILL HELP YOUR CHAPPED HANDS
DON'T YOU ... KNOW HOW TO PUT IT ON?
LIKE THIS ...
WHAT'S WRONG? YOUR FACE IS REALLY RED.
DO YOU HAVE A COLD?

.....
YOU'RE FEVERISH.
KYAA— WHAT'S WRONG ?!
FPPT

ZAA
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. HE'S ONE OUR BEST CUSTOMERS.
HER FIANCE MAY BE THE HEIR TO A MAJOR STORE, BUT HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE HER FATHER
AND EVEN SHE'S GETTING MARRIED SOON.
BE CAREFUL YOU DON'T DROWN.
NIGHT FISH-ING AGAIN ?
I HAVE PLANS
WHAT? LEAVING ALREADY ?
AFTER ALL, YOUR ROD IS TINY.
WHAT ABOUT TONIGHT?
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A "PRIVATE MATTER"?
...SO, ITO-HAN

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE WE FIRST MET, BUNSHICHI?
DO YOU RE-MEMBER ?
THAT TIME I GOT LOST.
ITO-HAN ... WHERE ARE YOU?
IF YOU'RE THERE, ANSWER ME!
DA DA DA

LIFE WAS HAPPY THEN.
YES, I REMEMBER THAT.
GLOMP
ITO-HAN ...
ITO-HAN
GRAB
EH?
UMMM ...

BUNSHICHI, DO YOU HATE ME?
HATE YOU?! NOT AT ALL.
FROM THE TIME I FIRST SAW YOU, I THOUGHT...
NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD IS THERE A WOMAN AS PRETTY AS HER...
THEN ... BEFORE I GET MARRIED, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO DO.
SOMETHING YOU WANT TO DO?
MAKE ME YOUR BRIDE?
TO-NIGHT ONLY
UMM

ITO-HAN!
Y...
GLOMP
AAH!
YOU'RE MY FIRST.
TREAT ME GENTLY.
ITO-HAN ...
I'M HONOR-ED.
TUG
SLIDE 3

ITO-HAN... DON'T COVER YOURSELF ...
NOO... IT'S EMBAR-RASSING.
NOT AT ALL.

YOU'RE LIKE HABUTA-E MOCHI— PURE WHITE
KNEAD
AND SOFT.

I'LL ...
IF YOU DO THAT...
SLRRP
SLRRP
I'LL ...
SLRRP
AH!

YOUR HANDS..
...
MOVE YOUR HANDS PLEASE, ITO-HAN..
CLENCH
EEK!
BAA-
PLEASE NOT THAT, BUNSHICHI!
NO!
BUN-SHICHI, YOU PERVERT..
ALL OF YOU.
I WANT TO SEE..

ITO
-HAN.
GRASP
OOH..
NGH..
HAA..

ITO-HAN ...
HOW'S THE WATER?
IT'S WONDER-FUL.
I'LL BE GOING THEN.
ZA-?!
CLUNK
WAH, MY SPONGE FELL
SPLAT

WELL THEN, HERE I GO!
HUH? BACK THEN?
DON'T STOP.
EVEN IF I SEEM TO BE IN PAIN...
UH...
YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL ITO-HAN
JUST LIKE BACK THEN.

DON'T STOP.
I TOLD YOU—
OW...
ARE... ARE YOU OKAY, ITO-HAN?
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
OOH!
BUNSHICHI!

AAH!
ITO-HAN, ARE YOU IN PAIN?
A LITTLE.
BUT HAPPINESS IS STRONGER RIGHT NOW.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BECOME SOMEONE ELSE'S.
HUG
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.

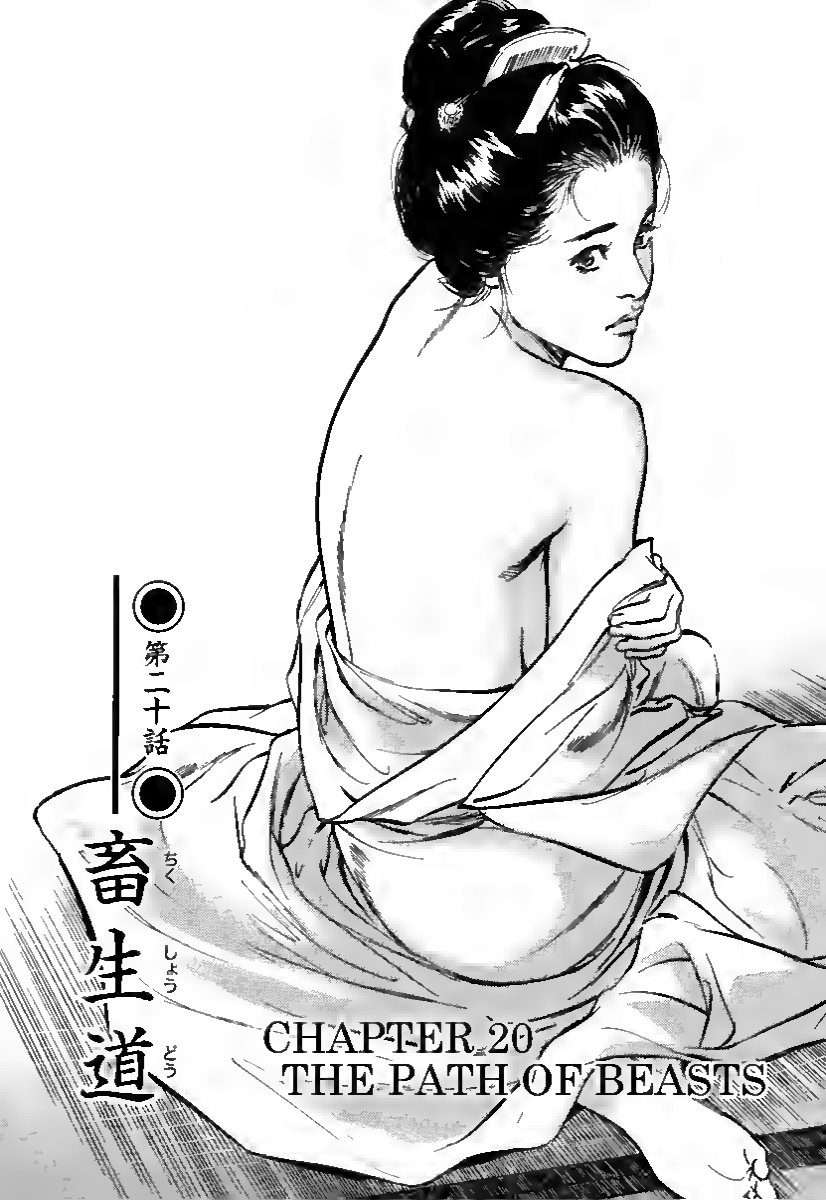
BUNSHICHI, WILL YOU ACCEPT THIS?
PROMISE STRING
WE COULD ALWAYS COMMIT LOVERS' SUICIDE TOGETHER AT TSUYUNOTENJIN FOREST IN UMEDA
HAND IN HAND..
KISHIWADA'S CHIKIRI CHARM?
YES— FROM GOZU SHRINE.
IT'S KNOWN FOR ITS MATCHMAKING CHARMS.
RED THREAD FOR THE MAN, WHITE FOR THE GIRL.
I'VE HEARD THAT WHEN THESE ARE SEWN INTO CLOTHING, THEIR TIES WILL DEEPEN
WHILE WE CAN'T STAY TOGETHER,
AT THE VERY LEAST WHEN WE MAKE LOVE IT WILL BE AS HUSBAND AND WIFE.
ITO-HAN ...
THERE'S NO WAY I'D EVER FORGET YOU. NO WAY...
EVERY TIME WE ARE TOGETHER, I WILL BRING ONE WITH ME, SO DON'T FORGET ME...
THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S RIGHT.

I GUESS THAT'S WHAT THEY MEAN BY "THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BRIDE IN THE THREE COUNTRIES."
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
YOU LOOK LOVELY, ITO-HAN.
TRULY... LOVELY.
FLAP

ITO-HAN AND I ONLY SPENT THREE NIGHTS TOGETHER, BUT...
WE MADE A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES.
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
WHAT?
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
ITO-HAN...
WHAAAAT?
WHAAT?
ITO-HAN...

WHAAAAT?!
ITO-HAN ...
I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO GET ...
A TASTE OF THE HELP BEFORE MARRIAGE.
ONATSU, THE DAUGHTER OF THE HIMEJI RICE MERCHANT TAJIMAYA, BOLDLY SENDS THE HANDSOME HELPER SEIJUUROU LOVE LETTERS, AND EVENTUALLY THEY ELOPE.
IT SEEMS WOMEN OF THE EDO PERIOD WERE MUCH MORE UNINHIBITED THAN THEY ARE TODAY
WRITTEN IN THE GENROKU ERA, IHARA SAKAKU'S BOOK "5 LUSTY LADIES" CONTAINS "THE TALE OF SUGATA-HIME AND SEIJUUROU," WHICH IS FAMOUS AS THE KABUKI PLAY "ONATSU SEIJUUROU."

**TRANSLATION NOTE. THERE ARE MANY REFERENCES TO KABUKI IN THIS CHAPTER—FROM YOSHIMATSU'S SEVEN ITEMS TO OJO'S USE OF THE WORD TEDAI TO REFER TO THE STORE STAFF, THE SAME WORD USED TO REFER TO BIT PART ACTORS IN KABUKI IN THE EDO PERIOD


第二十話
畜生道
CHAPTER 20
THE PATH OF BEASTS

INNER COMPOUND - OWARI-HAN
GINJIROU, LET'S GO!
LIKE I SAID, THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO YOSHIWARA!
YOU'RE A PRETTY UPTIGHT GUY, GINJIROU
YOU'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN AND YOU'RE GOING HOME SOON— DON'T BE SO STRAIT-LACED.
IF I GOT A RASH GOING THERE, I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO MAKE IT UP TO OEI WAITING FOR ME BACK HOME
OEI IS TSUZUKI HANSUKE'S STEP-DAUGHTER, RIGHT?
SHE'S HIS SECOND WIFE'S DAUGHTER, RIGHT? GOOD-LOOKING GIRL.
SO YOU WON'T GO OUT OF A SENSE OF DUTY TO YOUR FIANCEE BACK HOME? IF YOU HOLD BACK TOO MUCH, IT'S NOT GOING TO END WELL, HASHIRATANI!

OEI ISN'T THAT KIND OF GIRL!
BESIDES, EVEN IF YOU SAVE YOURSELF, YOUR GIRL MIGHT BE MAKING MERRY WITH SOME OTHER GUY, YOU KNOW.
SO THEY SAY, BUT...
EVEN WHEN HE'S HUNGRY, A SAMURAI PRETENDS TO BE FULL.
HE'S RIGHT
WE'RE JUST FOOT SOLDIERS.
IT TAKES MORE THAN SOME RUBBING TO GET A VIRGIN IN THE MOOD.
BUT HASHIRATANI, IF THE GIRL'S A VIRGIN, THEN YOU REALLY SHOULD GET IN SOME TRAINING.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT
GRR RR ...
THIS IS THE LAST WE'LL SEE OF YOSHIWARA. MAYBE WE SHOULD CUT LOOSE AND BUY A REALLY UPPER-CLASS LADY, EH?
ENOUGH ALREADY. LEAVE HIM AND LET'S JUST GO!
I... I DON'T WANT TO PRACTICE SOMETHING LIKE THAT!

FATHER MOTHER I'LL BE BACK AFTER I FINISH MY DUTIES IN EDO.
NAGOYA
DID YOU COME TO SEE ME OFF?
YES...
HERE.
OEI ...
THIS IS...
ISN'T THIS THE MATCHMAKING CHARM FROM OAGATA SHRINE?
I'LL KEEP THIS ONE.
TAAGATA SHRINE... WHICH MEANS...
THE OAGATA AND TAAGATA SHRINES ARE PAIRED SHRINES
IN NAGOYA, THEY ARE BELIEVED TO BRING GOOD FORTUNE IN RELATIONSHIPS, CHILDREN, WEALTH, HEALTH, AND BIRTH

OEI! WHAT'RE YOU DOING? FINISH YOUR ERRANDS!
AH... YES! I'LL DO THEM NOW, FATHER!
HE MIGHT BE YOUR STEP-FATHER, BUT HE TREATS YOU TERRIBLY.
NOT AT ALL.
HE'S BEEN QUITE NICE TO A CLINGY CHILD LIKE ME. HE'S JUST GOTTEN A LITTLE DIFFICULT SINCE MOTHER DIED
REALLY? I APOLOGIZE.
HE IS GOING TO BE MY FATHER AFTER I GET BACK FROM EDO.
EDO SEEMS LIKE IT'LL HAVE LOTS OF PRETTY WOMEN, BUT...
DON'T CHEAT ON ME, GINJIROU-SAN... OKAY?
EVEN IN EDO, THERE CAN'T BE A WOMAN PRETTIER THAN YOU.
—I'LL BE WAITING.
THERE'S NO WAY OEI WOULD CHEAT ON ME
WAIT JUST A BIT LONGER FOR ME...

LONG TIME NO SEE!
OEI...?
AHHHHHH— HAAAA—
NOTHING LIKE HOME.
EDO'S SLUMS WERE TOO CROWDED.
WHAT'S WRONG? ....OEI, WHY ARE WE OUT HERE?
BA-DUMP

OEI...
SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM A YEAR AGO. MAYBE IT'S A WOMAN'S CHARMS, BUT THERE'S A SEXINESS AND MATURITY TO HER...
GRRR
WA WA WHA—?
O... OEI..

YES, THERE, GINJIROU-SAN. MORE!
AAH... YES.
MM!
HAA...
HAA...
H!
MMM...
!
SHE'S... REALLY WET?
NO...NO WAY...OEI— ARE YOU NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE?
IT TAKES MORE THAN SOME RUBBING TO GET A VIRGIN IN THE MOOD
OOH!
DON'T PANIC...
SSHH
CLENCH
!
HU—HUH? ISN'T IT...HERE?
POKE POKE

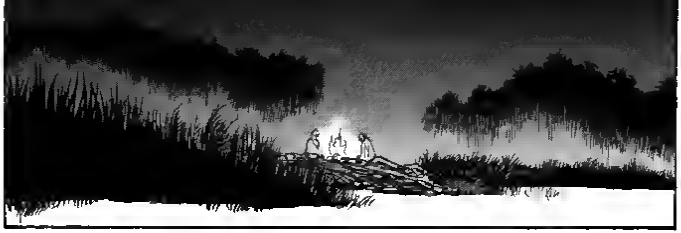
AANH
MMM.
HAA...
HAA...
OOH!!
MORE, MORE!
GINJIROU-SAN.. SO GOOD!
AAAH!
HAALIM!!
OEI...UM ...WAS I NOT YOUR FIRST?
OH...

EVEN I HAVE ONE OR TWO MEN WHO FLIRT WITH ME.
IT'S NOT... BAD OR ANYTHING, BUT WE'RE ENGAGED...
WHAT IF YOU WEREN'T?
.....!
AFTER ALL, GINJIROU-SAN, YOU FOOLED AROUND IN EDO, RIGHT?
I THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR TO YOU IF I CAUGHT SOMETHING.
I NEVER WENT TO... PLACES LIKE THAT...
YO—YOU KEPT LEERING AT ME.
BUT THEN WHY DID YOU SEDUCE ME?
I WOULD BE A FOOL TO BELIEVE SUCH EMPTY WORDS.
BUT—

YOUR INFATUATION HAS TURNED YOU INTO AN IDIOT.
YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE SUCH A GREAT CATCH?
THAT CAN'T BE... I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT YOU WERE WAITING FOR ME.
I THOUGHT IF WE DID IT ONCE, IT WOULD KEEP FROM BEING A PEST.
AND I WON'T CHASE AFTER A WOMAN WHO HAS DUMPED ME.
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD HIT YOU.
BUT AFTER THAT, WE'RE THROUGH
ARE YOU ANGRY WITH ME? IF YOU'RE UPSET, YOU CAN HIT ME.
...
OEI ...
I'M SORRY.

GINJIROU -SAN, FORGIVE ME...
FORGIVE ME!
WAAAAAAAH!
OOOH... AANH...
HAA...
HAA...
!
A MAN HAS HIS PRIDE... HUH...
HAA...
HAA...

OEI—
STOP!
WHAT IS SHE DOING? PICKING UP STONES...
HEY— DON'T BE STUPID!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO. MORE IMPORTANTLY, AREN'T YOU COLD?
...AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK ME ANYTHING ?

I... I CAN'T MARRY YOU.
OEI!
WAAAH

AFTER YOU LEFT FOR EDO, I WENT TO MY FATHER AND TOLD HIM WE WANTED TO MARRY...
MY FATHER
EH?

ガッ
POW

I ALWAYS KEPT THE OTHER CLOSE BY.
AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I SUFFERED, IT MADE ME FEEL BETTER.
I THOUGHT OVER AND OVER THAT I WANTED TO SEE YOU ONCE MORE, BUT...
EVEN THOUGH WE AREN'T BLOOD-RELATED, I'M STILL A WOMAN WHO HAS LAIN WITH HER FATHER!
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
OEI, YOU ...
I CAN'T MARRY YOU LIKE THAT.
HE TOLD ME THAT I'D STILL HAVE TO BE WITH HIM EVEN AFTER I GOT MARRIED.

BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZII
PEOPLE ARE NOT ANIMALS. THOSE WHO HAVE INCESTUOUS RELATIONS WILL FALL AND BECOME BEASTS...
THAT'S WHAT WAS DRAWN ON A SCROLL DEPICTING THE HELLS THAT THE MONK AT THE TEMPLE SHOWED ME.
I THOUGHT... IF YOU HATED ME AND HIT ME A LOT... IT MIGHT ATONE FOR WHAT'S BEEN DONE...
THAT'S WHY YOU TOLD ME THOSE LIES... SAID SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS?

NEVER
EVER SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN.
SO I THOUGHT I COULD APOLO-GIZE WITH MY DEATH...
BUT RATHER THAN GETTING ANGRY, YOU WERE KIND.
NEVER AGAIN...
GINJIROU -SAN...
UWAAAAAAAA...
UUGH..
AHH...

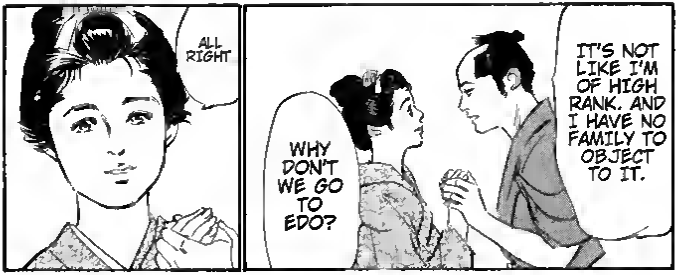
JUST TELL ME ONE THING...
DO YOU DISLIKE ME?
WELL THEN, LET'S GET MARRIED AS PLANNED.
OKAY ?
YES. ALL RIGHT.
BUT BEFORE THAT, WE HAVE TO FINISH THIS...
GIN-JIROU -SAN?

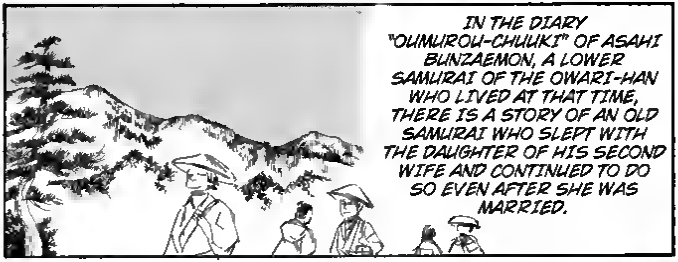
FATHER, PLEASE, LEAVE ME ALONE ...
HAS SEX WITH ME BECOME UNPLEASANT BECAUSE GINJIROU IS BACK?
I'M GETTING OLD, TOO. I CAN'T SATISFY YOU WITHOUT USING THESE THINGS.
NOW, COME
DAH

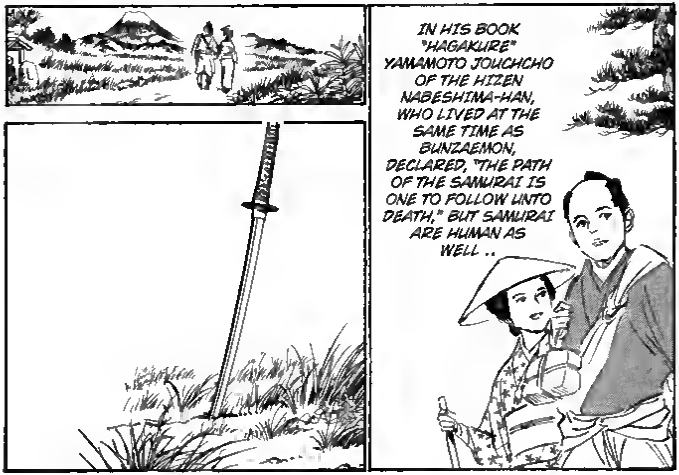
BAM
ARE YOU DIS-OBEYING YOUR FATHER?
YOU ARE NO FATHER!
YOU'RE LOWER THAN DOG FECES, YOU COWARD!
POP

I'LL KILL YOU!
HAH!
HYAAA!
SA— SA—
SAVE ME!
EEEEEEEEE..

OEI.
I'M GIVING UP BEING A SAMURAI.
WHAT?


ALL RIGHT
WHY DON'T WE GO TO EDO?
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M OF HIGH RANK. AND I HAVE NO FAMILY TO OBJECT TO IT.

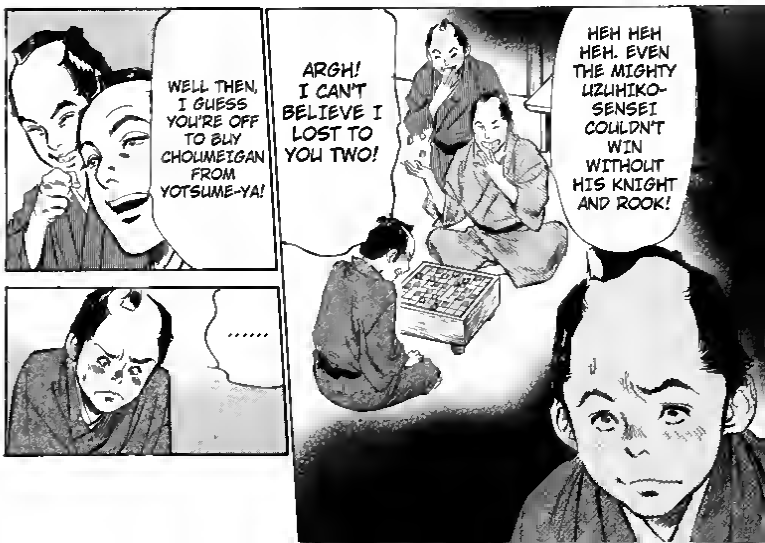

IN THE DIARY "OUMUROU-CHUUKI" OF ASAHI BUNZAEMON, A LOWER SAMURAI OF THE OWARI-HAN WHO LIVED AT THAT TIME, THERE IS A STORY OF AN OLD SAMURAI WHO SLEPT WITH THE DAUGHTER OF HIS SECOND WIFE AND CONTINUED TO DO SO EVEN AFTER SHE WAS MARRIED.


IN HIS BOOK "HAGAKURE" YAMAMOTO JOUCHCHO OF THE HIZEN NABESHIMA-HAN, WHO LIVED AT THE SAME TIME AS BUNZAEMON, DECLARED, "THE PATH OF THE SAMURAI IS ONE TO FOLLOW UNTO DEATH," BUT SAMURAI ARE HUMAN AS WELL ..

第二十一話
四ツ目屋
CHAPTER 21:
YOTSUME-YA

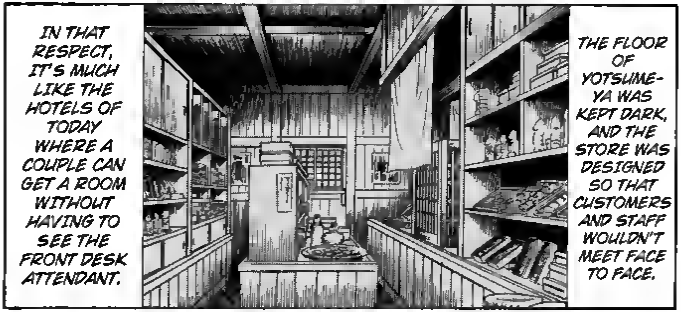
RYOGOKU, EDO
YONEZAWA,

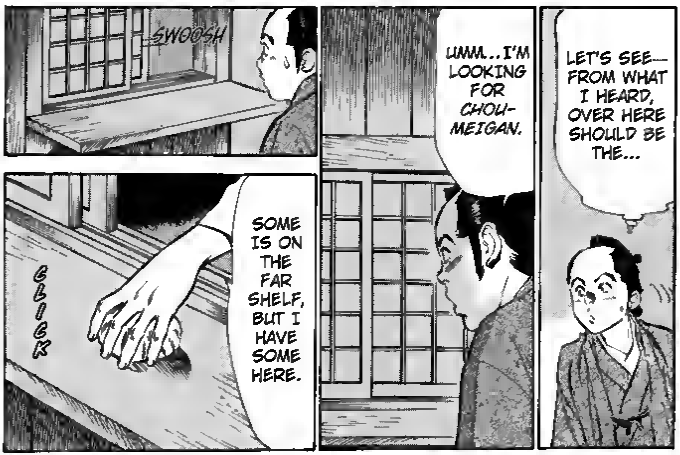
SO THIS IS THE YOTSUME-YA.

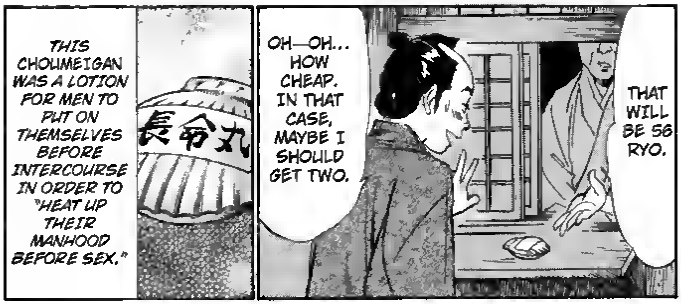

HEH HEH HEH. EVEN THE MIGHTY UZUHIKO-SENSEI COULDN'T WIN WITHOUT HIS KNIGHT AND ROOK!
ARGH! I CAN'T BELIEVE I LOST TO YOU TWO!
WELL THEN, I GUESS YOU'RE OFF TO BUY CHOUMEIGAN FROM YOTSUME-YA!
.....

DO I REALLY HAVE TO GO?
YES! AND IT HAS TO BE DURING DAYLIGHT WHEN THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE OUT.
WE'LL BE USING THE STUFF YOU BUY.
NOW LET'S SEE. HOW SHOULD I GO IN?
SHUFFLE
GLANCE GLANCE
YOTSUME-YA WAS WHAT WE TODAY WOULD CALL AN ADULT GOODS STORE
THERE, IMPOTENCY DRUGS— LIKE TODAY'S VIAGRA— AND DILDOS WERE SOLD.
EVEN IN THE EDO PERIOD, PEOPLE FOUND SUCH GOODS NECESSARY. BACK THEN, THERE WERE TWO YOTSUME-YA —ONE IN EDO AT RYOGOKU, AND THE OTHER AT SHINBASHI IN OSAKA.
MEN WEREN'T THE ONLY CUSTOMERS, BUT GIVEN THE TYPE OF SHOP, IT COULD BE DIFFICULT TO ENTER.
ALL RIGHT, THERE'S A BREAK IN THE CROWD. NOW!
DASH

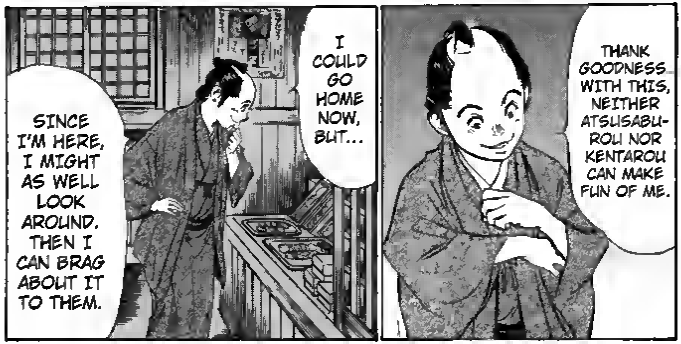
JUST LIKE THE RUMORS SAID- THE STORE IS DIM AND THE SHOPKEEPER IS HIDDEN.


IN THAT RESPECT, IT'S MUCH LIKE THE HOTELS OF TODAY WHERE A COUPLE CAN GET A ROOM WITHOUT HAVING TO SEE THE FRONT DESK ATTENDANT.
THE FLOOR OF YOTSUME-YA WAS KEPT DARK, AND THE STORE WAS DESIGNED SO THAT CUSTOMERS AND STAFF WOULDN'T MEET FACE TO FACE.


SWOOSH
UMM...I'M LOOKING FOR CHOU-MEIGAN.
LET'S SEE— FROM WHAT I HEARD, OVER HERE SHOULD BE THE...
CLICK
SOME IS ON THE FAR SHELF, BUT I HAVE SOME HERE.


THIS CHOUMEIGAN WAS A LOTION FOR MEN TO PUT ON THEMSELVES BEFORE INTERCOURSE IN ORDER TO "HEAT UP THEIR MANHOOD BEFORE SEX."
長命丸
OH—OH... HOW CHEAP. IN THAT CASE, MAYBE I SHOULD GET TWO.
THAT WILL BE 56 RYO.

THE SLOGAN FOR IT WAS, "IF YOU THINK THAT SHE WILL NOT RIPEN BEFORE BUSINESS IS DONE, RUB THIS BETWEEN HER LIPS AND WAIT A WHILE—EVEN SHE WILL REJOICE."
A SIMILAR ITEM FOR FEMALES CALLED "NYOETSU-GAN" WAS AN EROTIC STIMULANT THAT WAS ALSO SOLD.


SINCE I'M HERE, I MIGHT AS WELL LOOK AROUND. THEN I CAN BRAG ABOUT IT TO THEM.
I COULD GO HOME NOW, BUT...
THANK GOODNESS. WITH THIS, NEITHER ATSUSABU-ROU NOR KENTAROU CAN MAKE FUN OF ME.

THIS ONE'S ABOUT ATSUSABU-ROU'S SIZE.
HEH HEH... SO TINY...
WOW, THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT SHAPES
A—CHOO!
HIS IS A LOT FLESHIER, THOUGH
WOAH— THIS ONE'S AS BIG AS KANTAROU'S, BUT...
YOU'RE WRONG, I TELL YOU. I WONDER IF SOMEONE'S TALKING ABOUT ME?
WAAH— THAT'S A DIRTY TRICK! THE PIECES HAVE GONE EVERY-WHERE
JUST BECAUSE YOU WERE ABOUT TO LOSE...
HEY, HEY, NOW YOU'RE SNEEZING.
HA—CHOO!
UZUHI-KO?

HE'S PROBABLY BADMOUTHING US WHILE CRYING BECAUSE HE'S TOO SCARED TO GO INTO THE YOTSUME-YA.
HMM. THE MANUFACTURER REALLY MAKES A DIFFERENCE...
RUSTLE
A... A WOMAN?
BAH!
IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE VERY WELL, BUT SHE MIGHT BE A REAL BEAUTY. WHY ON EARTH WOULD SHE WANT A DILDO?
FLINCH

UMMM... I, I WANT A DILDO...
WE HAVE MANY DIFFERENT ONES LOCATED ON THE SHELVES TO THE INNER RIGHT...
I'VE ALREADY LOOKED AT THOSE. I WANT... THAT IS, DON'T YOU HAVE SOMETHING B...BIGGER ?
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING BIGGER, HOW ABOUT THIS?
HER VOICE IS THAT OF AN 18 OR 19 YEAR OLD.
AND SHE WANTS SOMETHING BIGGER?
WHA... WHAT IS THAT? IT'S THE SIZE OF A SMALL SWORD!
RUB
RUB

EHH—?!
THIS WON'T DO.
I'M AFRAID WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LARGER THAN THAT IN STOCK.
YOU DO HAVE ZUNIKE O-ICHIBAN KOBAN, DON'T YOU?
EHHH?! UM, THAT IS, YOU SEE...
ZUNIKE O-ICHIBAN KOBAN? WHAT ON EARTH COULD HAVE SUCH A SCARY NAME?
IT DIDN'T SELL VERY WELL, SO WE HAVE THEM MADE TO ORDER...
THEN PLEASE, ORDER ONE. MAY I PAY UP FRONT?
VERY WELL. YOUR ORDER SHOULD BE READY IN FIVE DAYS.
THANK YOU.

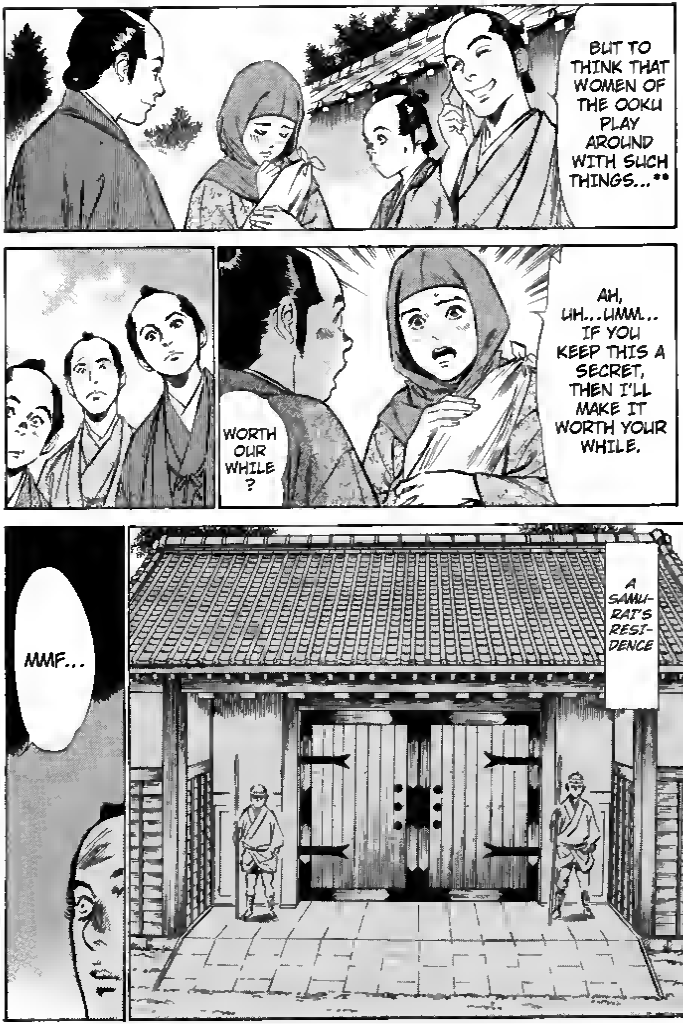
I ONLY KNOW THE NAME, NOT HOW IT LOOKS.
WHAT'S THAT?
ZU— ZUNUKE O-ICHIBAN KOBAN?!
BUT SHE EVEN SAID THAT A DILDO ALMOST A FOOT LONG WAS TOO SMALL, SO...
BUT THE THING IS, SHE WAS YOUNG.
THE ONLY PERSON WHO'D NEED SOMETHING LIKE THAT IS A STRETCHED-OUT OLD HAG, RIGHT?
EVEN IF YOU PLAYED HER CO-STAR, SHE'D HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, HUH, ATSUSABURO.
WHAT KIND OF MANIAC IS SHE?
YES, IT IS. THERE'S NO WAY A YOUNG GIRL WOULD HAVE ANY USE FOR SUCH A GIGANTIC PIECE.
HUH? THAT'S STRANGE. I MEAN, ISN'T IT WEIRD?

CHOMEIGAN
長命丸
CHOMEIGAN
YOTSUMEYA
四ツ目屋
MAYBE HER MOM SENT HER?
WHAT MOTHER WOULD SEND HER DAUGHTER TO BUY SUCH A THING?
AND YOU SAID SHE SPOKE LIKE A MEMBER OF THE SAMURAI CLASS?
SUSPICIOUS.
WE'LL HAVE TO INVESTIGATE THIS OURSELVES.
IS MY ORDER READY?
THE ZUNUKE O-ICHIBAN KOBAN IS READY.

OHHHH —!
GOOD DAY.
I SEE NO PRO-BLEMS WITH IT.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OOHMM ...HEH HEH HEH!
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME FOR A WHILE.
YOU SEE, IN THE O-OKU, THE NEWEST OSHE ARE MADE TO BUY DILDO FROM THE YOTSUME-YA.
THE... THEN YOU AREN'T GOING TO BE USING THAT...?
AHEM...
THERE'S NO WAY I'D USE SUCH A THING. I'M STILL A VIR...

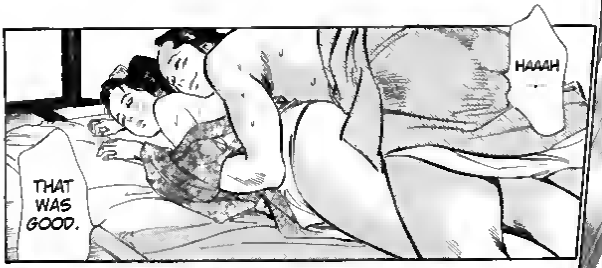
*O-SUE = THE LOWEST-RANKING NEWCOMERS TO THE SHOGUN'S HAREM.

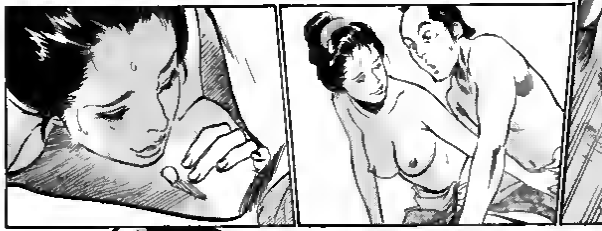

BUT TO THINK THAT WOMEN OF THE OOKU PLAY AROUND WITH SUCH THINGS...**
AH, UH...UMM... IF YOU KEEP THIS A SECRET, THEN I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE.
WORTH OUR WHILE ?
A SAMU-RAI'S RESI-DENCE
MMF...

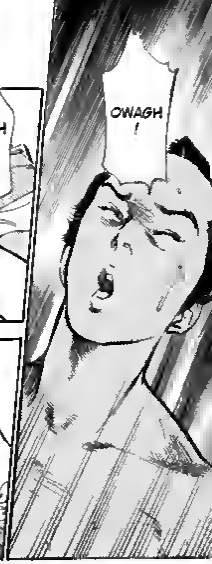
WHAT'S WRONG? AREN'T YOU COMING?
がばっ
GLOMP
I'M COMING!
I AM!
AH!
MM
YOUR PACKAGE IS A LITTLE SMALL, BUT LET'S THOROUGHLY ENJOY OURSELVES TONIGHT
GRAB
YOU'RE QUITE THE LOOKER, AREN'T YOU?
HAA HAA
MMM...

AAH... YOUNGER MEN REALLY ARE SO... MUCH... HARDER!!
SLIDE
SQUELCH
RUSTLE
THRUST
HARDER... OOHH...
MM..
AAH—
AHH!
UMMF ...
OHH
AH
AAH
AH
AH
EE!
NOT AT ALL. BE THANKFUL YOU WEREN'T CHOSEN.
AA...
DAMMIT! WHY DO THEY GET TO HAVE ALL THE FUN...

THRUST
THRUST
HAA HAA...
SLIDE
SLIDE
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
AN HOUR ?
WAIT AN HOUR AND YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
MM!
AH!
I CAN'T... WAAA..
YOU CLING SO TIGHTLY...
NIK...
THWACK
SLOOP


HAAAH
THAT WAS GOOD.




OWAGH

AH!
SLIDE

HEY NOW ...
LIKE THAT, HUH? YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO GREEDY.

MM

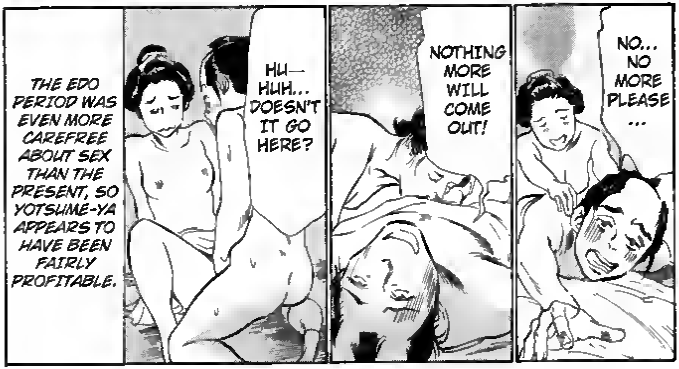
HOO— WE JUST DID IT TWICE IN SECONDS.
FLOP
MMM AHH ..
SHUDDER
MPFF...
UMF UMF UMF ...
AA..
AA!
LET'S SEE... A QUICK SMOKE.
THRUST THRUST THRUST
CLAMP
GRAB
DRAG

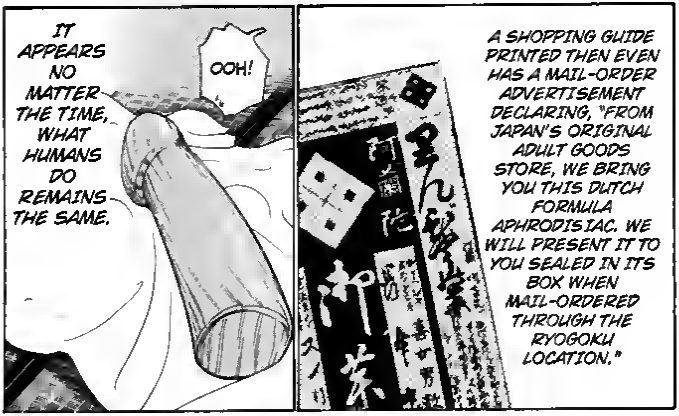
DON'T PULL OUT... KEEP GOING UNTIL I'VE HAD MY FILL!
CHOMP
AH... AAHHN-NNG!
THEY SEEM LIKE QUITE THE MIDDLE-AGED SEX MANIACS.
SOUNDS LIKE THE GUYS WON'T GET A BREAK UNTIL THEY'VE COME SIX TIMES IN A ROW.
HA HA HA
TEN.
HUH?
NOT SIX, TEN.
HAA...
AA—
THRUST
THRUST
AA..

YES. EVEN THE PROSTITUTES DON'T WANT TO COME HERE ANYMORE. THAT'S WHY I HAD TO ORDER THAT ITEM FROM THE YOTSUME-YA.
NO WAY. JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE YOUNG, THAT'S STILL...
HUH? THAT'S PITIFUL FOR SOMEONE SO YOUNG. NOT YET! I'M NOT SATISFIED YET!
PLEASE ...JUST A LITTLE BREAK...
EEEEEEENGH ...
TUG TUG
WO... WOMEN ARE SCARY ...
UWAAA ...
SQUEEZE
I—I'M NOT SCARY!

AT THIS RATE, MY FIRST TIME IS LIKELY TO BE WITH A TOY, BUT...
I'D PREFER IT WITH A REAL MAN.
HUH? WHA?
IS IT OKAY?
NOD
BLUSH
SLAM
EEEK!
BE GENTLE.
MM...
SMACK
RUSTLE

AH!
IS IT TICK-LISH HERE, TOO?
STOP... IT TICKLES ...
RUB


THE EDO PERIOD WAS EVEN MORE CAREFREE ABOUT SEX THAN THE PRESENT, SO YOTSUME-YA APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FAIRLY PROFITABLE.
HU— HUH... DOESN'T IT GO HERE?
NOTHING MORE WILL COME OUT!
NO... NO MORE PLEASE ...


IT APPEARS NO MATTER THE TIME, WHAT HUMANS DO REMAINS THE SAME.
OOH!
A SHOPPING GUIDE PRINTED THEN EVEN HAS A MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISEMENT DECLARING, "FROM JAPAN'S ORIGINAL ADULT GOODS STORE, WE BRING YOU THIS DUTCH FORMULA APHRODISIAC. WE WILL PRESENT IT TO YOU SEALED IN ITS BOX WHEN MAIL-ORDERED THROUGH THE RYOGOKU LOCATION."

<YOTSUME-YA> THE END

第二十二話
行水女
CHAPTER 22
THE BATHING WOMAN

江戸
EDO.
..HMPH
ANOTHER WARM NIGHT TONIGHT
HEY, GENJIRO!
STARTLE
HEY ...
WANNA HANG OUT FOR A BIT?

THEN I DON'T WANT TO LEARN!
LOSING IS HOW YOU LEARN.
I HAVEN'T GOT THE GIFT.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH GAMBLING
WELL ...
...
GEEZ, YOU'RE SUCH A PRUDE.
I TAKE YOU TO YOSHIWARA, YOU RUN AWAY AT THE GATE.
TONIGHT'S THE NEW MOON. THE PERFECT TIME TO OBSERVE THE STARS.
OH!
FINALLY BOUGHT IT, HUH?
TODAY, I'M GOING TO OBSERVE THE STARS WITH THIS.
WOOSH
BUT ...
GENJIROU!
TO-NIGHT'S THE
STAR-GAZING ...?
tap tap tap

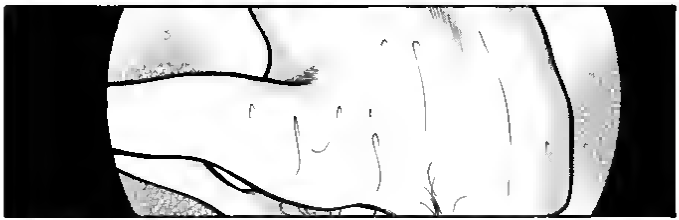
GORGEOUS...
SUPPOSEDLY, THE SHOGUN'S CHIEF ASTRONOMER SAKUZAEMON TAKAHASHI TOLD HIS PUPILS TO MEASURE THE LENGTH OF ONE DEGREE OF THE MERIDIAN...
ONE DAY, I'LL...
BANG
EH?
PA-

CR-CRAP!
IT'S THE NEW MOON TODAY— THE DAY FOR THE SHOGUN'S FIREWORKS DISPLAY!
THE FIREWORKS AT THE RIVER FESTIVAL OF RYUUGOKU ARE FAMOUS TODAY. BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN FIREWORK DISPLAYS WERE FORBIDDEN BECAUSE OF THE DANGER OF FIRE.

GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT.
OH WELL
IN 1733 FIREWORKS WERE USED AT THE SHIJIN FESTIVAL TO SEND OFF THE SOULS OF THE DEAD AFTER A CHOLERA OUTBREAK.
BOOM
BOOM
THIS USE QUICKLY BECAME TRADITION.
HM?
WHOO
WHOO
FIREWORK DISPLAYS WERE ALSO OFTEN HELD ON THE SUMIDA RIVER BY THE THREE HOUSES OF MITO, KISHUU AND OWARI, AND BY THE SENDAI-HAN.

WOW!

BAM



THAT'S IT!

IT... IT JUST DOESN'T WORK UPSIDE DOWN.

I... NO!
USING SUCH AN EXPENSIVE TELESCOPE FOR THAT IS ..

WHAT A WOMAN ...
YES!
THIS IS BETTER
SLIDE
RATTLE
HUH?
OW OW OW .....
GOOD THING THIS SHRUB WAS HERE!
WHOA—
HUUUH?
RATTLE
AH!
THUD
OO!

buzz
buzz
buzz
buzz
AHAHA... CRAP. I BROKE IT.
buzz
GIVEN THE DIRECTION, IT SHOULD BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHE...
GULP
THIS WAY, THE WATER WOULD STILL BE A GOOD TEMPERATURE WITHOUT BEING TOO COLD— PERFECT FOR A QUICK RINSE.
WITH THE CREATION OF BATHHOUSES, IT WASN'T UNCOMMON FOR PEOPLE TO BATHE TWO OR THREE TIMES A DAY.
IN THE EDO PERIOD, ONE BATHED NOT ONLY TO STAY CLEAN BUT ALSO TO COOL OFF.
TO COOL DOWN, HOUSEHOLDS WOULD FILL A DRUM-BARREL WITH WATER DURING THE AFTERNOON
SHE'S DEFINITELY GOING TO TAKE ONE TONIGHT, TOO
THE THERE'S NO MISTAKE

TURN THIS WAY...
C'MON, TURN MY WAY...
!
RUSTLE
SHE DIDN'T NOTICE...
CLINK
PLIP
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
EH?
!
ZAA

IT'S TOO BAD THERE AREN'T ANY FIREWORKS TONIGHT.
SHALL I TURN YOU OVER TO THE POLICE?
!
EH!
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY!!
I'M SO ASHAMED OF MYSELF. I...
I WON'T TRY TO RUN OR HIDE.

WOW, AN HONEST MAN. WHAT A RARE FIND YOU ARE.
I DON'T DISLIKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
BUT I'M IMPRESSED THAT YOU KNEW I WAS BACK HERE IN SUCH AN OUT OF THE WAY PLACE.
THE TRUTH IS... WHILE I WAS STARGAZING LAST NIGHT WITH MY TELESCOPE, I...
AND YOU DECIDED TO TRY TO FIND ME?
FOR GOOD-NESS SAKE ..
I'M SO ASHAMED
CHUCKLE
NOW— WHATEVER SHALL I DO? SHOULD I TURN YOU OVER TO THE POLICE?
OR SHOULD I LET YOU GO?
I'LL LET YOU GO... IF YOU CAN BEAT ME.
BEAT YOU?

I'M SO WEAK THAT I'VE NEVER WON ONCE.
JUST RECENTLY MY FRIEND DRAGGED ME TO A GAMING HALL,
AND JUST LIKE THAT, ALL THE MONEY I HAD SAVED TO BUY MY TELESCOPE, GONE.
I FINALLY EARNED ENOUGH AGAIN TO BUY IT, AND I GOT SO DISTRACTED BY YOU THAT I FELL FROM A ROOF AND..
AND BROKE IT?
NOD
YOU MEAN AT GAMBLING?
IF YOU WIN, I LET YOU GO.
LOSE, AND IT'S THE POLICE.
NO GOOD.
I ALREADY KNOW THE OUTCOME.
MY,
ARE YOU REALLY THAT STRONG?
NOT AT ALL.

SWISH
NOT A BIT. IT'S MY FAULT FOR SPYING.
WELL, THEN. I'M A LITTLE AT FAULT, TOO...
HERE WE GO.
カラ コロ
CLATTER
E... EVEN!
UH, WAIT! I'LL GO WITH ODD.
WHICH WILL YOU CHOOSE?
SLAM!

IN GAMBLING, INDECISIVENESS IS THE MARK OF A LOSER.
IF YOU'RE A MAN, MAKE A CHOICE AND STICK TO IT.
EVEN! EVEN, PLEASE.
NOW YOU'RE TALKING.
PAT
GAME ON!
HMMM? PERHAPS SEEING ME NAKED CHANGED YOUR LUCK?
I'M A LITTLE UNHAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME, SO...
HOW ABOUT ANOTHER ROUND?
ANOTHER ROUND?
IF IT'S OKAY, I'D RATHER KEEP THIS WIN AND BE ON MY WAY.
EHH? WHY WOULD YOU WANT THA...?
IF YOU WIN...
IF I WIN, I'LL TAKE THAT BROKEN TELESCOPE.

WANT TO TRY YOUR LUCK WITH THIS POT?
DUCK
OR DO YOU NOT LIKE OLDER WOMEN?
I'M IN!
BIA—
RATTLE

WHICH WILL YOU TAKE?
SAME AS BEFORE— EVEN!

SHOW THEM!

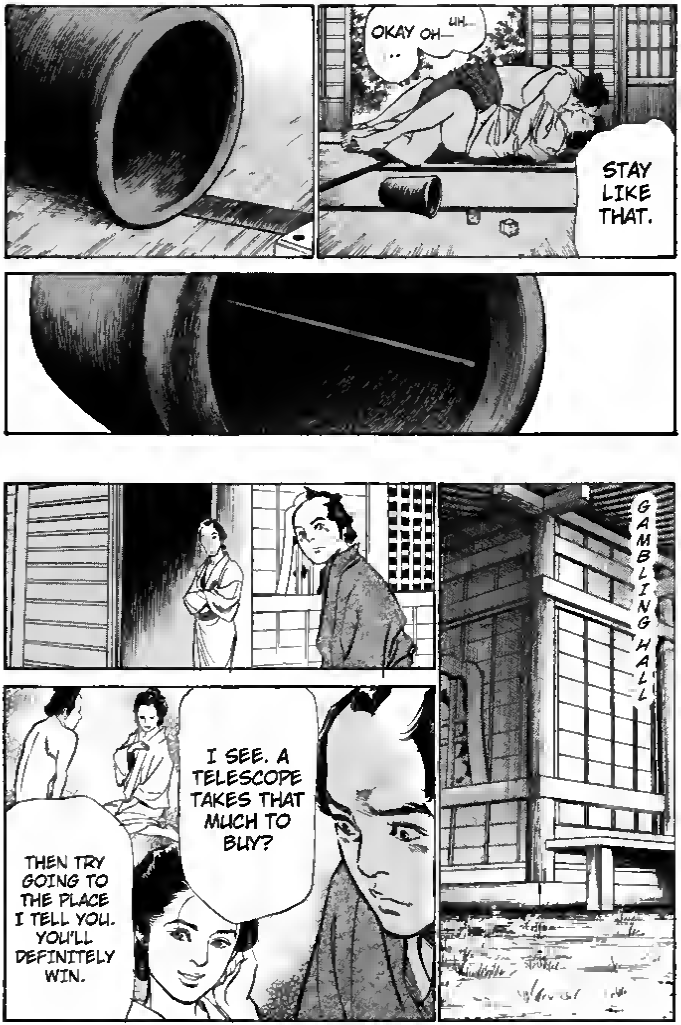
slide
WOW— SNAKE EYES TWICE IN A ROW...
RARE THINGS DO HAPPEN.
I—I WON...

NOW, DO AS YOU PLEASE.
AA!
GRAB
MM ...

THEY'RE JUST LIKE A MAN'S PARTS.
A WOMAN'S STIFFENS TOO WHEN SHE'S EXCITED.
THEY'VE GOTTEN HARD..
AAH!
LICK
HEH HEH, THIS IS CALLED A HIDDEN TATTOO...
IT ONLY APPEARS WHEN I'M EXCITED.
WHA- WHAT'S THIS?
!

I CAN'T BELIEVE SUCH A TATTOO EXISTS ...
THERE AREN'T ANY TATTOO ARTISTS WHO CAN DO THEM ANYMORE.
WHEN IT APPEARS, IT MEANS I'M READY FOR YOU.
CRADLE
THRUST
MM!
UWA!
NHA!
GU-
SQUISH
SQUISH
OOH!
AA!

GLI
GLI
AH!
OOH!
OO...
GLI
GLI
OOH...!
SHUDDER
AAH!


OKAY OH—
UH...
STAY LIKE THAT.
GAMBLING HALL
I SEE. A TELESCOPE TAKES THAT MUCH TO BUY?
THEN TRY GOING TO THE PLACE I TELL YOU. YOU'LL DEFINITELY WIN.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS FULL OF IT.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID ...
WHAA?
!

PLACE YOUR BETS!
ODD OR EVEN?
IT'S BEEN EVEN THE PAST 5 TIMES. IT'S GOT TO BE ODD.
WHO WOULD BET ON EVEN?
E...
EVEN!
SLAM
OOOOH....
SNAKE EYES! EVEN!
THERE ARE MANY CONS IN GAMBLING.
YOU CAN CHANGE THE OUTCOME BY USING A NEEDLE PLACED IN THE FLOOR OR BY THREADING A SILK STRING THROUGH THE JAR AND MOVING THE DICE AT THE REVEAL...
GRIN

●「行水女」完●

第二十三話 無惨絵

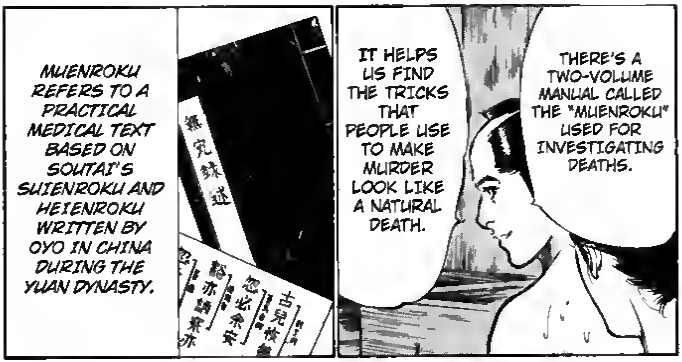
CHAPTER 23 *MUZAN-E*

EDO: NAITO SHINJUKU
HEH HEH HEH
AAHH NN...
KI-CHO
DON'T BE SO GRABBY...
I COULDN'T POSSIBLY STOP GRABBING THAT BUTT.
LIE DOWN HERE.

NH...
AH!
HEH HEH HEH HEH...
DON'T SHAKE YOUR CHEST SO...
...MUCH?
!!
HYAAAH!

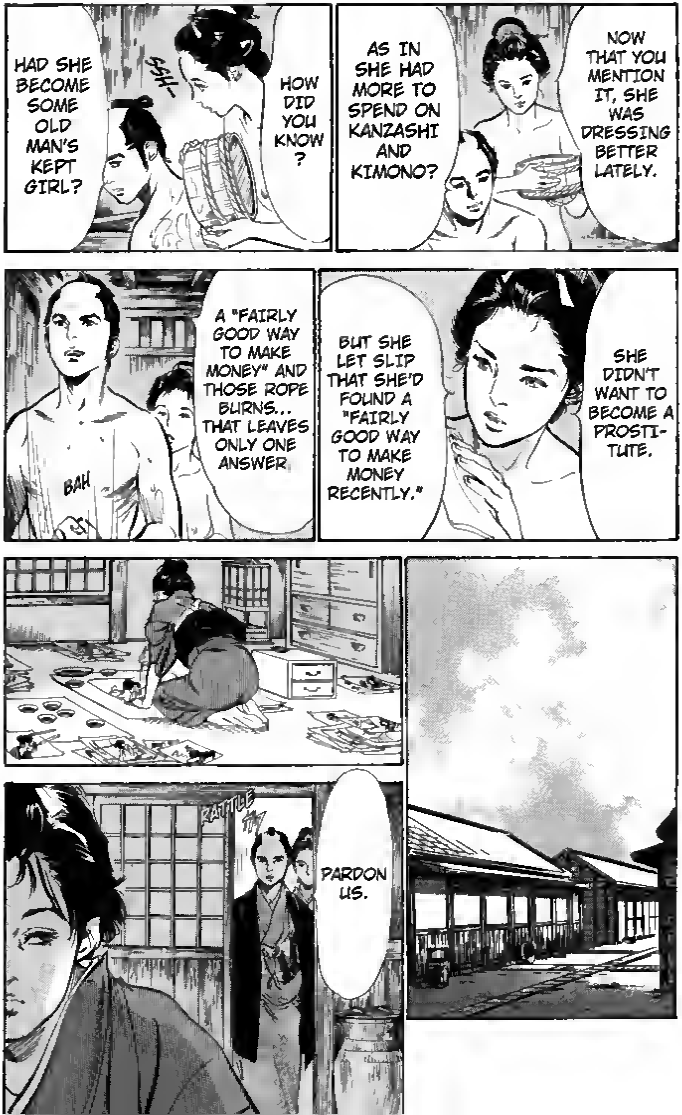
WHAT? MURDER?
THE HANGING DISCOVERED AT NAITO SHINJUKU...?
SOUTH QUADRANT CONSTABLE MATSUDA HIKOJIROU
女湯
WOMEN'S BATH

THAT'S RIGHT. TOFUYA KOMACHI, THE GIRL THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT...
SHE HAD NO REASON TO HANG HERSELF.
HER PARENTS DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT EITHER
ACTUALLY, WE WERE THINKING THIS LOOKED LIKE A MURDER DOWN AT THE STATION AND WERE INVESTIGATING QUIETLY.
IS THAT SO?
THERE WERE RED ABRASIONS ON THE GIRL'S BACK. THOSE ONLY APPEAR IF THE CORPSE IS LAYING ON THE GROUND SOMEWHERE FOR A WHILE.
YOU CAN TELL THAT?
YEAH


THERE'S A TWO-VOLUME MANUAL CALLED THE "MUENROKU" USED FOR INVESTIGATING DEATHS.
IT HELPS US FIND THE TRICKS THAT PEOPLE USE TO MAKE MURDER LOOK LIKE A NATURAL DEATH.
MUENROKU REFERS TO A PRACTICAL MEDICAL TEXT BASED ON SOUTAI'S SUIENROKU AND HEIENROKU WRITTEN BY OYO IN CHINA DURING THE YUAN DYNASTY.

IT DESCRIBES THE CHARACTER-ISTICS BODIES DISPLAY IF THEY DIED FROM SUICIDE, FIRE, ICE OR POISON, AND IT WAS USED TO TELL WHETHER A DEATH WAS BY NATURAL CAUSES OR MURDER.
IT CAME TO JAPAN DURING THE MUROMACHI ERA* IN TRANSLATION VIA THE KOREAN PENNINSULA. IT WAS USED BY LOCAL INSPECTORS AND CONSTABLES AS AN AUTOPSY TEXT UP UNTIL THE MEIJI PERIOD.

ABOUT THAT GIRL... WAS SHE ACTING STRANGELY RECENTLY?
LET ME THINK ...


NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, SHE WAS DRESSING BETTER LATELY.
AS IN SHE HAD MORE TO SPEND ON KANZASHI AND KIMONO?
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
SSH!
HAD SHE BECOME SOME OLD MAN'S KEPT GIRL?
SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BECOME A PROSTI-TUTE.
BUT SHE LET SLIP THAT SHE'D FOUND A "FAIRLY GOOD WAY TO MAKE MONEY RECENTLY."
A "FAIRLY GOOD WAY TO MAKE MONEY" AND THOSE ROPE BURNS... THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE ANSWER.
BAH
RATTLE
PARDON US.

OH, WHAT BRINGS THE HACCHOU-BORI POLICE TO A MUSTY OLD PLACE LIKE THIS?
IT SEEMS TOO MANY ARTISTS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING FORBIDDEN EROTICA LATELY.
MY HUSBAND'S EARNING MORE, SO I HAVEN'T EVEN DONE ONE LATELY.
WOW— HOW PRETTY!
YOU HAVE GOOD TASTE... YOU'RE QUITE THE LOOKER YOURSELF— SHALL I DRAW YOU INTO A PILLOW BOOK?
HEY NOW, DON'T BE JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS
SHUU
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO MIGHT HAVE DRAWN THIS?

MUZAN-E ARE ILLUSTRATIONS BASED UPON PLAYS AND EVENTS THAT WERE POPULAR TOWARDS THE END OF THE SHOGUNATE.
THAT'S A MUZAN-E.

THESE PICTURES ESPECIALLY WERE VERY POPULAR WITH ONE CLASS OF PEOPLE DURING THE EARLY EDO PERIOD.
AS THE NAME SUGGESTS, MANY OF THEM SHOWED MURDER AND OTHER GRIM SCENES.

THIS SHOWS A ROPE TECHNIQUE TAUGHT IN THE KOSSHIJUTSU STYLE OF THE ROKUGO TOSUI SCHOOL.
ILLUSTRATIONS OF MONSTERS AND DECAPITATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN POPULAR, BUT...
THIS IS RATHER SENSUAL.

MY GREAT GRAND-FATHER FOUNDED THE STYLE. THERE'S NO WAY I WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE IT.
OH? WHY DO YOU KNOW SUCH A THING?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, EITAROU, HAVE ANY CUSTOMERS ASKED FOR THESE TYPES OF ILLUSTRA-TIONS ON THE SLY?
IT'S A VERY SMALL SCHOOL. I'M NOT SUR-PRISED YOU DIDN'T.
I KNEW ABOUT "ROPE-BINDER MATSUDA," BUT I NEVER IMAGINED IT WAS THIS KIND OF TECHNIQUE ..
EVEN IF IT HAD TO DO WITH THE MURDER OF TOFUYA KOMACHI?
OF COURSE NOT. EVEN IF THEY HAD, I WOULD NEVER TELL YOU ABOUT IT.
...THAT WASN'T SUICIDE?
...MURDER?

THE ROPES SLIPPED AND SHE ENDED UP HANGING?
THE MURDERER PROBABLY TRIED TO IMITATE THE KNOTS IN ONE OF THESE ILLUSTRATIONS, BUT IT WAS AMATEUR WORK.

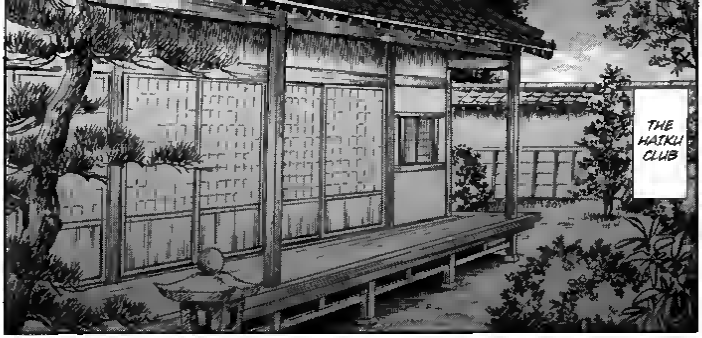
SAY, HONEY, WEREN'T YOU ASKED FOR A *MUZAN-E* ABOUT HALF A YEAR AGO?
MOST LIKELY.

HIKOJIRO -DONO?
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT *MUZAN-E*?
MUZAN -E?

I WAS ASKED TO DO THIS AS A SHOW PIECE FOR THE OLD MASTER OF THE YAMANOYA IN NIHONBASHI'S HAIKU CLUB.
YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
I'D HEARD RUMORS THAT THE TOWN'S ARTIST HAD HOOKED UP WITH A SAMURAI ...
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D BE YOU, JUUBEI.
Oh?
I LEARNED KOSSHIJUTSU FROM HIKOJIROU-DONO'S FATHER.
I WAS ORIGINALLY A RETAINER OF THE IYOMATSUYAMA -HAN, BUT ..
HAIKU CLUB?

SO...
SOMEONE SAW THIS AND WANTED TO TRY IT FOR THEMSELVES ON AN ACTUAL FEMALE?
THOUGH THE RICH LIKE THESE, THEY AREN'T ILLEGAL, SO YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
IT'S CALLED THE DAKU DAKU CLUB.
BUT REALLY IT'S A GROUP THAT LIKES TO BRAG ABOUT THEIR MUZAN-E COLLECTION AFTER DINING. HM...

EH?
I COULD INVESTIGATE ONE BY ONE, BUT IT'D BE A LOT OF WORK.
BUT THERE ARE OVER 30 MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FIND THE GUY?
THAT WILL MAKE EVEN A 100-YEAR OLD MAN DO A DOUBLE TAKE.
SO I WANT UTAMARU EITAROU-SENSEI TO DRAW A PICTURE OF A BOUND WOMAN...


THE HAIKU CLUB

I WONDER IF THE WOMAN'S REALLY THAT GOOD-LOOKING.
EVEN IF SHE IS, RECREATING SUCH A THING MUST BE DIFFICULT.
I WONDER IF IT'S REALLY TRUE THAT THEY'LL RECREATE THE SAME POSE THAT'S IN THIS MUZAN-E.

WELL NOW, WE SHOULD BE ENDING OUR MEETING TONIGHT SOON...
BUT BEFORE THAT, A LITTLE ENTERTAIN-MENT.
SWISH
!!
CLAP CLAP

O—
OHHHH
...
A MUZAN-E BROUGHT TO LIFE USING BINDING TECHNIQUES!
HER AURA OF INNOCENCE STIRS THE BLOOD.
THE GOAL IS VIRGINAL, GOT IT?
VIRGINAL?
MOST MEN WANT TO LOOK AT THOSE EMBARRASSING PLACES BECAUSE YOU HIDE THEM..
EVEN IF YOU ARE IN THE SAME POSE AS THE ONE I DREW, WITHOUT THAT PERSONA, YOU LOSE THE MAGIC.
LET'S BEGIN!

AH!
OOOHHH ...
OHH ...
LIFT
THAT'S IT. IT'S THAT SENSE OF SHAME THAT'LL STIR THEM UP.
NAAA ...
TUG TUG
FLUTTER
WOAHHHH ...

I PRESENT YOU WITH THE SCISSOR FORM, GENTLEMEN.
NOOO...
PLEASE ...NO MORE...
PULL
WE'RE NOT DONE YET!
NOW FOR THE FLOATING TECHNIQUES!
NOOOOO
AHHHHHNNN...
Stug
AND—
SPIN

RAISE HER HIGH, AND HERE'S A SPECTACULAR ARCHER'S MOON FORM!
ぶん
SWING
OOH ...
AND FOR THE FINALE, THE FORM OF THE GOLDEN FISH ON OWARI CASTLE IN NAGOYA.
OHHHH-HHHHH!!
UGGHHH !!

IF YOU DROP YOUR CHIN, THEN IT LOSES THE SHAPE.
DIS-OBEDIENT GIRLS NEED TO BE PUNISH-ED!
TUG!
UHH... GUH...
MPH...GG ...BRE... BREATHE
OH! HER WHITE SKIN HAS FLUSHED TO A DELICATE PINK.
....

HEY! IF YOU STRUGGLE TOO MUCH, THE ROPES WILL COME UNDONE AND...
SNIP
SNIP
SNAP!
AAAAHHH!
BAM
HNNGH
UH...

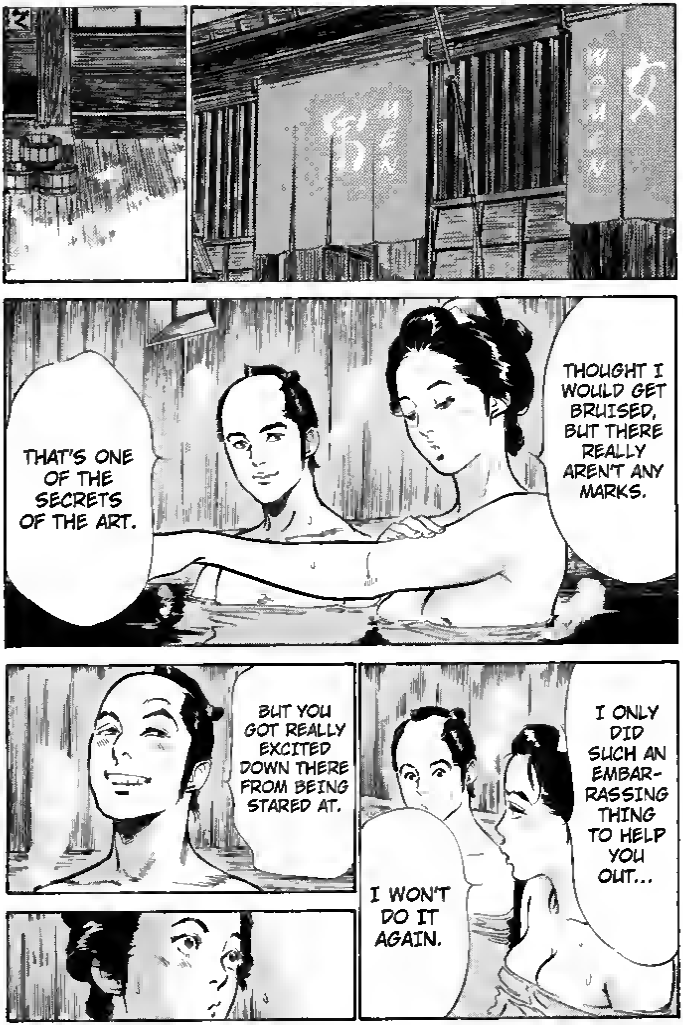
WONDER-FUL!
AND THAT WAS THE SECRET TECHNIQUE OF THE TOUSUI SCHOOL KOSSHIJUTSU BINDING TECHNIQUES... THE ROPE OF UNBINDING.
NICE JOB!
WOW

WHATEVER'S THE MATTER, MAESHIMAYA-SAN? LETTING OUT SUCH A WILD CRY.

SHE'S GOING TO DIE FROM A SNAPPED NECK.

DASH
THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT, RIGHT?
I WOULDN'T ...
I DIDN'T ...
UH...UM MM...
SWOOSH
AHH...C... CAN'T BREATHE...
PULL
UGH!
TUG

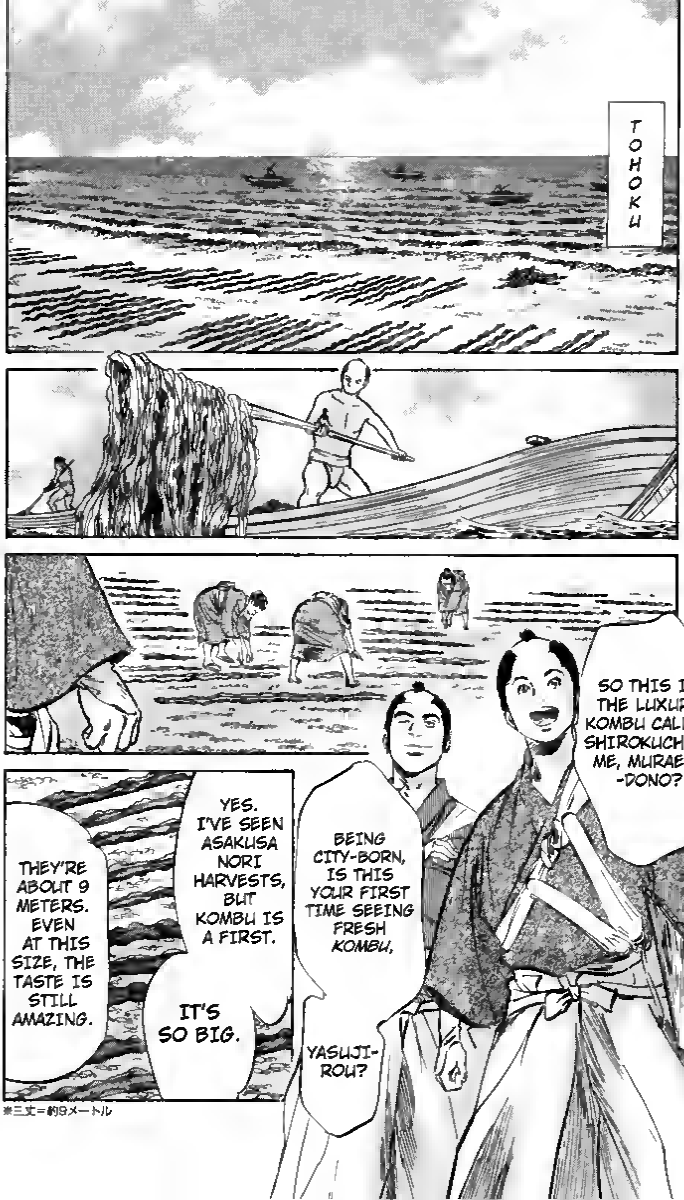
PURPLE-TASSELED JITTE: AS A RULE, THE TASSEL OF THE JITTE FOR INSPECTORS AND CONSTABLES WAS RED, PURPLE OR PALE GOLD FOR THE "KANTO PEACEKEEPERS" AND WHITE FOR TEMPLE POLICE, BUT ACCOMPLISHED INSPECTORS AND CONSTABLES WOULD NORMALLY RECEIVE A PURPLE-TASSELED ONE IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR EFFORTS.
TOFUYA KOMACHI SUFFERED MORE!
A PURPLE TASSELED JITTE.... COULD HE BE ROPE-BINDER MATSUDA?
HNNNGH
STAY DOWN!


女湯
THOUGHT I WOULD GET BRUISED, BUT THERE REALLY AREN'T ANY MARKS.
THAT'S ONE OF THE SECRETS OF THE ART.
I ONLY DID SUCH AN EMBARRASSING THING TO HELP YOU OUT...
BUT YOU GOT REALLY EXCITED DOWN THERE FROM BEING STARED AT.
I WON'T DO IT AGAIN.

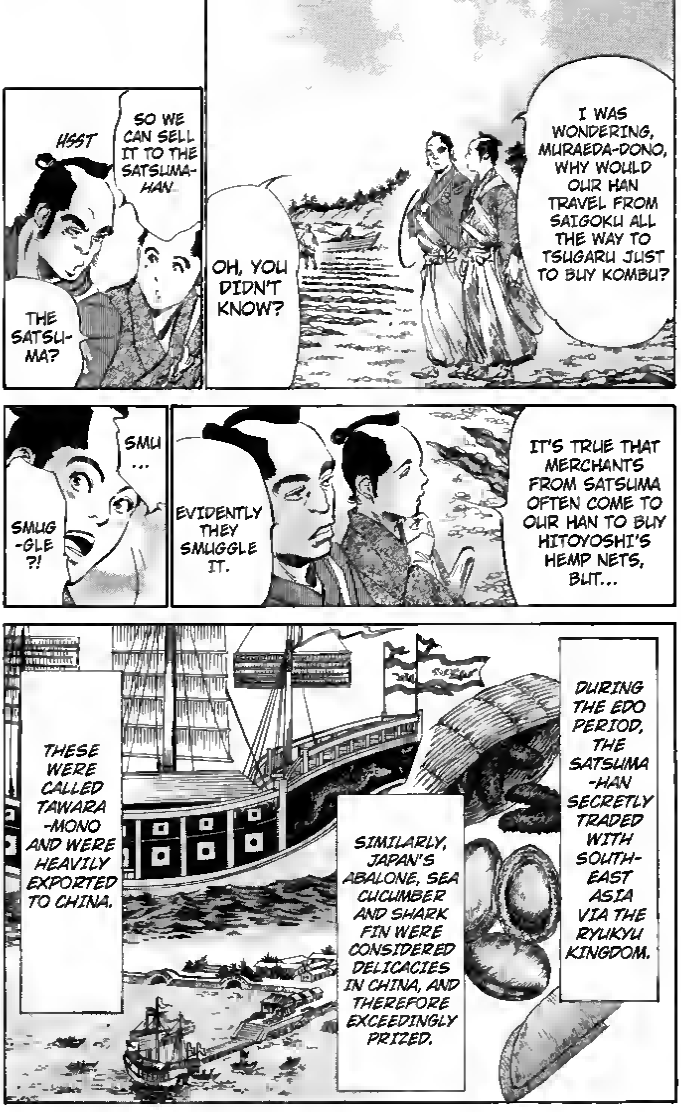
UTAMARU EITAROU SAID SHE WANTS TO USE YOU AS A MODEL AND DRAW THAT LAST POSE FOR A MUZAN-E.
WHAT?
EITAROU -SENSEI WOULD SURELY DRAW ME WELL.
THEN WANT TO TRY BEING TIED UP AGAIN?
MY GOOD-NESS, YOU!
AT THE END OF THE SHOGUNATE, DUE TO CHANGING SOCIAL CONDITIONS, MUZAN-E BECAME VERY POPULAR.
TSUKIOKA YOSHITOSHI'S MUZAN-E WERE ESPECIALLY ACCLAIMED, AND WOULD LATER INFLUENCE ITOU SEIU IN PIONEERING NEW GROUND WITH HIS ILLUSTRATIONS OF BONDAGE AND DOMINATION.

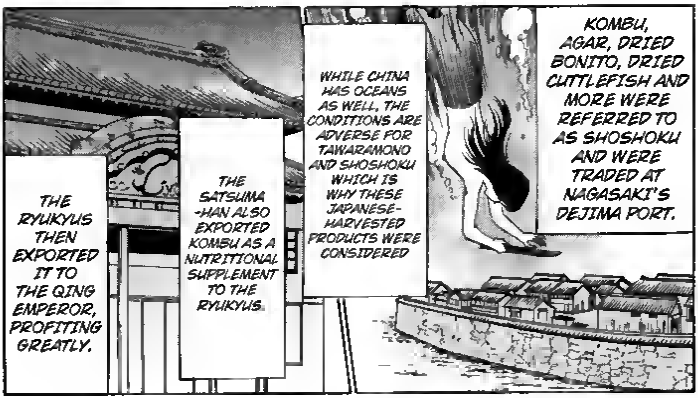
<MUZAN-E> THE END

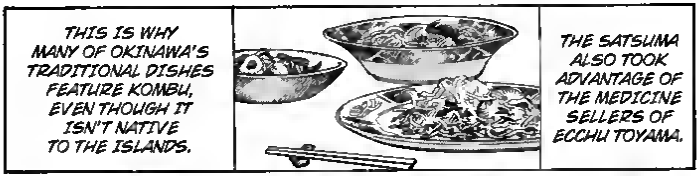
第二十四話
ねぷた
CHAPTER 24 NEPUTA


TOHOKU
SO THIS IS THE LUXURY KOMBU CALLED SHIROKUCHIHAME, MURAEDA-DONO?
BEING CITY-BORN, IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME SEEING FRESH KOMBU, YASUJI-ROU?
YES. I'VE SEEN ASAKUSA NORI HARVESTS, BUT KOMBU IS A FIRST.
IT'S SO BIG.
THEY'RE ABOUT 9 METERS. EVEN AT THIS SIZE, THE TASTE IS STILL AMAZING.

※三丈＝約9メートル


I WAS WONDERING, MURAEDA-DONO, WHY WOULD OUR HAN TRAVEL FROM SAIGOKU ALL THE WAY TO TSUGARU JUST TO BUY KOMBU?
OH, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
HSST
SO WE CAN SELL IT TO THE SATSUMA-HAN.
THE SATSU-MA?
IT'S TRUE THAT MERCHANTS FROM SATSUMA OFTEN COME TO OUR HAN TO BUY HITOYOSHI'S HEMP NETS, BUT...
EVIDENTLY THEY SMUGGLE IT.
SMU...
SMUG-GLE ?!
DURING THE EDO PERIOD, THE SATSUMA-HAN SECRETLY TRADED WITH SOUTH-EAST ASIA VIA THE RYUKYU KINGDOM.
SIMILARLY, JAPAN'S ABALONE, SEA CUCUMBER AND SHARK FIN WERE CONSIDERED DELICACIES IN CHINA, AND THEREFORE EXCEEDINGLY PRIZED.
THESE WERE CALLED TAWARA-MONO AND WERE HEAVILY EXPORTED TO CHINA.

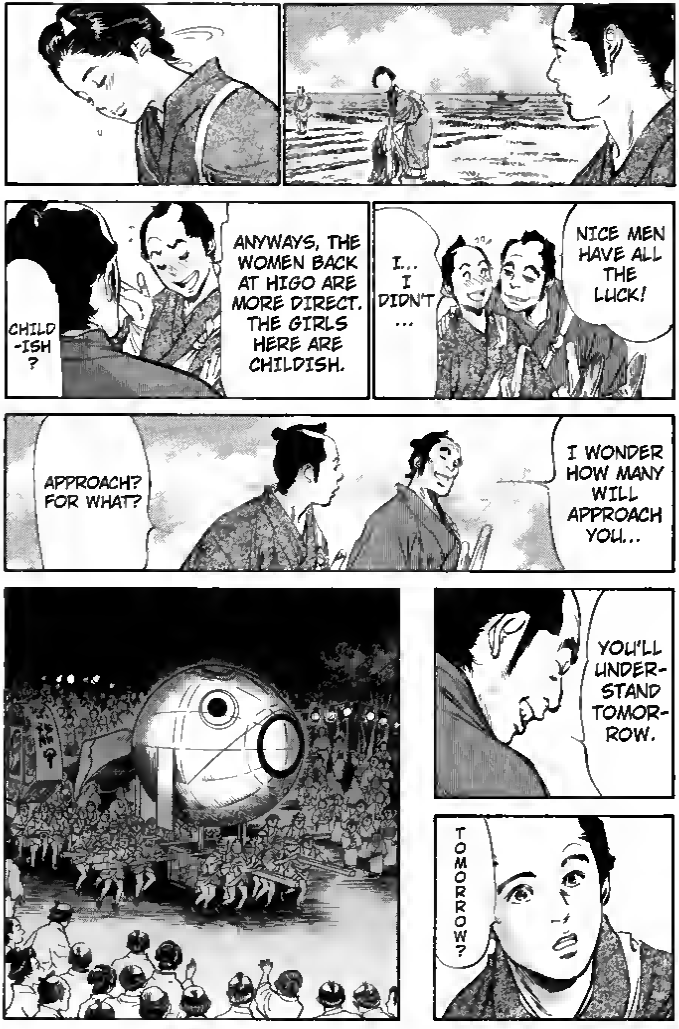

KOMBU, AGAR, DRIED BONITO, DRIED CUTTLEFISH AND MORE WERE REFERRED TO AS SHOSHOKU AND WERE TRADED AT NAGASAKI'S DEJIMA PORT.
WHILE CHINA HAS OCEANS AS WELL, THE CONDITIONS ARE ADVERSE FOR TAWARAMONO AND SHOSHOKU WHICH IS WHY THESE JAPANESE-HARVESTED PRODUCTS WERE CONSIDERED
THE SATSUMA-HAN ALSO EXPORTED KOMBU AS A NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE RYUKYUS.
THE RYUKYUS THEN EXPORTED IT TO THE QING EMPEROR, PROFITING GREATLY.


THIS IS WHY MANY OF OKINAWA'S TRADITIONAL DISHES FEATURE KOMBU, EVEN THOUGH IT ISN'T NATIVE TO THE ISLANDS.
THE SATSUMA ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE MEDICINE SELLERS OF ECCHU TOYAMA.

WH-WHOA
CLACK!
EEK!
KOMBU IS THAT PROFITABLE?
WHO KNEW?

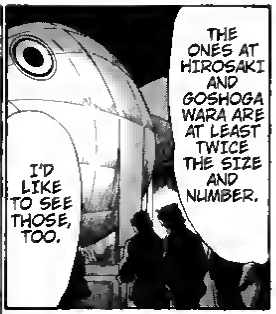
GRAB
SQUEEZE
NANI NOMEKURAC -CHANZUYO? (WHY DID YOU TRIP?)
EE
(MY FOOT GOT CAUGHT ON A STONE AND I FELL.)
BADUMP!

Heh Heh Heh
TAP TAP TAP
BA
UM, EXCUSE ME, BUT YOUR HAND...
FOR-GIVE? HE GOT LUCKY!
MURAEDA -SAMA, MATSUZAKI -SAMA OF THE YASHIO-HAN?
SAMURAI, PLEASE FORGIVE HER—
COMPARED TO THE WOMEN BACK AT YATSUSHIRO, THEY AREN'T SUNBURNED AT ALL..
LIKE PURE SNOW.
THE WOMEN HERE ARE QUITE PALE.
THESE WOMEN AREN'T JUST PALE, THEY'RE SLENDER AND SOFT TO THE TOUCH.
THE WOMEN OF A FISHING VILLAGE ARE ALL DARK BECAUSE OF THE SALTY WINDS.


ANYWAYS, THE WOMEN BACK AT HIGO ARE MORE DIRECT. THE GIRLS HERE ARE CHILDISH.
CHILD-ISH?
I... I DIDN'T ...
NICE MEN HAVE ALL THE LUCK!
APPROACH? FOR WHAT?
I WONDER HOW MANY WILL APPROACH YOU...
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND TOMORROW.
TOMORROW?

ラッセーラ
ラッセーラ
RASSEI-RA
RASSEI-RA

SO THIS IS A NEBUTA? MARVELOUS!
IT'S CALLED A NEPUTA IN THESE PARTS. THESE AREN'T ALL THAT BIG.
ARE THERE OTHERS THAT ARE BIGGER?


THE ONES AT HIROSAKI AND GOSHOGAWARA ARE AT LEAST TWICE THE SIZE AND NUMBER.
I'D LIKE TO SEE THOSE, TOO.

BUT YOU KNOW, YASU-JIROU ...
THE NEPUTA HERE ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM ANYWHERE ELSE.
DIFFER-ENT? HOW'S THAT?

SUPPOSEDLY, NEBUTA ORIGINALLY MEANT NEMURI NAGASHI*, OR TO GO WITHOUT SLEEP.
NEMURI NAGASHI? YOU MEAN LIKE THAT CUSTOM AT KOSHINMACHI WHERE FOR ONE NIGHT, THEY DO AN ALL-NIGHTER?
RIGHT! AND THE BEST WAY TO GET RID OF SLEEPINESS IS TO MOVE
AND ON THAT NOTE, I'LL BE OFF...
GO LOOK AT THE FLOATS OR SOMETHING.
!
YOU'RE THE ONE FROM THE KOMBU PLANTA ....
RING-RING.

BADUM?
...COME WITH, PLEASE ...
SHIFT.
?
SHOULD GO THERE ...
ARE YOU TELLING ME. TO GO OVER THERE?
IS THERE SOME-THING OVER THERE?

OH!
FIRE-FLIES ?
IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED TO SHOW ME?
AREN'T YOU SWEET.
LOOK AROUND CLOSE
HMMM ?

WHA—?
WHAAAAAT...?
WHA—
IN HIGO, GUYS DO THE SEDUCING, BUT IN TSUGARU, I GUESS IT'S THE WOMEN!
WI WI WI—
WITH ME?
GRIP
NOD
THE COUNTRY-SIDE IS FAR MORE WILD THAN EDO.

I'VE SEDUCED EVERYTHING FROM OLD WOMEN TO YOUNG LADIES BACK IN HIGO. I'M FAMOUS FOR IT.
NOT AT ALL! IN EDO, I FREQUENTLY VISITED YOSHIWARA.
HUH?
FACE IS RED. YOUR FIRST TIME?
RUSTLE
LOVING ?
EH HEH. GLAD. I HOPE WILL LIKE MY FIRST TIME LOVING.
NOT GROWN ENOUGH. PLEASE DON'T MIND!
MINE TOO SMALL.
NOT
HUH? .. GROWN ...
ENOUGH?

WAAMPF!
SLURP
GLOMP
MMM.
SLURP
YE... YEAH.
LET'S HAVE.
LET'S HAVE ENJOY.

...HELL WITH IT. IF IT'S LIKE THAT THEN...
TEE HEE!
I'LL MAKE THIS GIRL MUSH...
USING THE SKILLS I POLISHED ON MY CONQUESTS!
CHUKUKU
AAHHN!
"NO... NO..." FALLS UNDER "MORE!" "YES!" MEANS YOU LIKE IT.
...NO, STOP
....PLAYING WITH ME... THERE...
MM...
TWIST TWIST

OHH ...
O...

I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A BIG ONE BEFORE.

IT'S LIKE A DAIKON!

A MAN THAT DOESN'T TAKE WHAT'S OFFERED ISN'T A MAN!

IN HIGO, THE WOMEN CALL THIS PLACE MEMEJO.
WHAT DO THEY SAY IN TSUGARU?
WE DON'T DISCUSS ...SUCH THINGS ...
IT'S THE SWEET POTA-TO OF HIGO YATSU-SHIRO.
MINE ISN'T THAT WHITE.
WHILE IT'S DARK, IT'S THICK AND HARD.
PSST PSST
MA ...
...
IF YOU DON'T TELL ME, I'LL LEAVE.
FITA
SHALL WE TRY THE STANDING TOWER OF THE 48 STANCES?
PLEASE GIVE ME THAT...
HO—. TSUGARU AND SATSUMA CALL IT THE SAME THING, HUH?
NOW TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.

EE!
OO!
AAAH!
THRUST
MM!
THRUST
EENH!
AHH!
MM!
AHH!
WOAH!
THRUST
AAH!
AA!
UH...
UH!

FLOP
YOU'RE DONE ALREADY?
YOU JUST FELT TOO GOOD...
AAA!
BA-DUMP
OOH!

WHAT'S WRONG? DID WE GET TANGLED TOGETHER?
AH OW OW OW ...

HAA ...
HAA ...

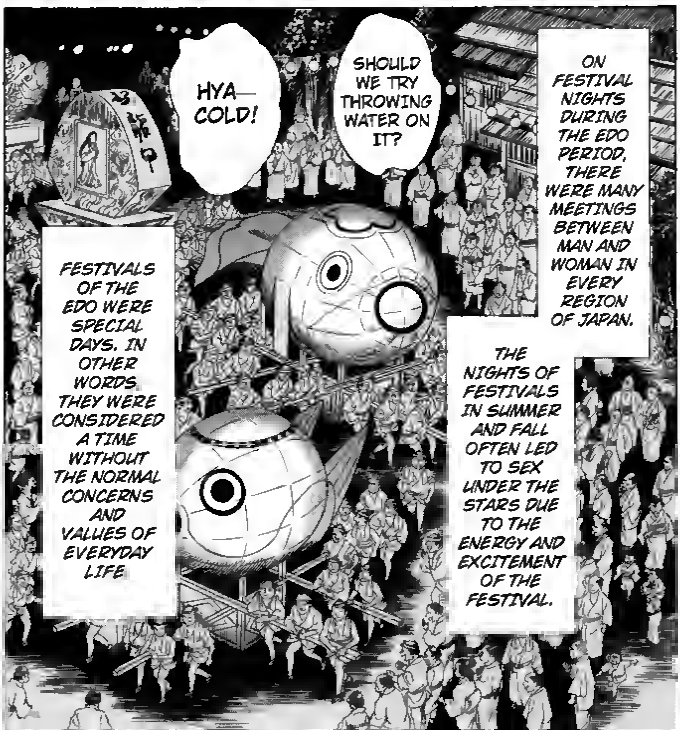
HUH?
I...I CAN'T PULL OUT!

THRUST
HERE I GO!
O... OWWW ...
—WHAT?
A VIRGIN?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU WAS?
I SAID MY FIRST TIME.
GRAB
FORGIVE ME! EVEN IF IT WAS IN IGNORANCE ...
TO DO SUCH A THING WITH AN UN-TRIED GIRL...

FINISH IT...
PLEASE ?
PLEASE DON'T STOP.
THUMP
FINE.
I'LL BE GENTLE, OKAY?
AA..
THRUST
AH...
MHA..
THRUST
THRUST
MM..
AHH...
AA..
OOH

AA!
OOH!
IT'S LIKE I'VE HAD A HOLE POKED IN MY BODY.
SORRY. DID IT HURT?

MORE THAN THE CICADA WHO CRIES HIS BURNING PASSION,
THE SILENT FIREFLY BURNS ITSELF... HUH.
MURAEDA -DONO?
JUMP!
I CAN'T PULL OUT.
WHY ARE YOU HIDING BEHIND THERE?
WHAT ON EARTH HAS HAPPENED?


HYA— COLD!
SHOULD WE TRY THROWING WATER ON IT?
ON FESTIVAL NIGHTS DURING THE EDO PERIOD, THERE WERE MANY MEETINGS BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN IN EVERY REGION OF JAPAN.
FESTIVALS OF THE EDO WERE SPECIAL DAYS. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WERE CONSIDERED A TIME WITHOUT THE NORMAL CONCERNS AND VALUES OF EVERYDAY LIFE
THE NIGHTS OF FESTIVALS IN SUMMER AND FALL OFTEN LED TO SEX UNDER THE STARS DUE TO THE ENERGY AND EXCITEMENT OF THE FESTIVAL.

NEPUTA THE END

AFTERWORD

THANK YOU FOR PURCHASING AMOROUS WOMEN OF THE FLOATING WORLD 3!

I'M VERY HAPPY THAT THE THIRD VOLUME WAS PUBLISHED. IT WAS ALL MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO YOU. WHILE I FEEL THE LOVE SCENES DEPICTED IN THIS BOOK ARE VERY IMPORTANT, I HAVE TO WONDER WHAT IT WAS REALLY LIKE BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN DURING THE EDO PERIOD. FOR EXAMPLE, A SINGLE KISS MAY HAVE BEEN REALLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE THINK OF. I DREW IT NORMALLY, BUT WAS THAT REALLY OKAY? WHEN I CONSIDER THIS, I OFTEN WISH I COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME TO SPY ON SOME PEOPLE MAKING LOVE.

BIG THANKS TO THE ORIGINAL SCRIPT WRITER, TAKAMURA CHINATSU, THE EDITORS, AND ALL THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN MAKING THIS BOOK. I'LL CONTINUE WORKING HARD!

KAORU HAZUKI

MATCH-MAKING AND *MATCH-BREAKING*

THERE ARE MANY SHRINES IN JAPAN THAT ARE SAID TO HAVE CERTAIN EFFECTS. FOR EXAMPLE, FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS THERE IS KITANOTENMANGU; FOR SAFE BIRTH, SUITENGU; FOR HOUSEHOLD SAFETY, SHIBAMATA TAISHAKUTEN. FOR CHRISTIANS, MORE CONCERNED WITH WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL BE ALLOWED INTO HEAVEN AFTER THE LAST JUDGMENT, THE IDEA OF OBTAINING SOMETHING CONCRETE FROM A DEITY IN THE HERE AND NOW MAY SEEM A BIT STRANGE.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE ONE MAKES AN OFFERING OF COINS BEFORE STATING THEIR WISH, IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE GODS OF JAPAN ARE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY OF GRANTING WISHES. THIS IDEA COMES FROM THE HEAVY INFLUENCE OF CHINESE, TAOISM WHICH SEES THE PRESENT AS BEING ABSOLUTE. THERE IS RESEARCH THAT SHOWS JAPAN'S SHINTO DEITIES ARE ALSO STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE ONES OF TAOISM.

THERE ARE ALSO MANY SHRINES IN JAPAN THAT ARE DEDICATED TO SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES AND RELATIONSHIPS, OR MATCHMAKING. JAPAN'S GREATEST MATCHMAKING DEITY IS IZUMOTAISHA. BEFORE THE WAR, ONLY TWO SHRINES WERE CALLED TAISHA—IZUMOTAISHA AND KUMANOTAISHA. AS TO WHY IZUMOTAISHA IS CONSIDERED A GOD OF RELATIONSHIPS, SOME EXPLANATION IS NECESSARY.

THE REASON THE OLD CALENDARS OF JAPAN REFER TO OCTOBER AS KANNAZUKI (THE MONTH OF NO GODS) IS BECAUSE IT WAS BELIEVED THAT DURING THIS MONTH, THE MANY DEITIES OF JAPAN LEFT THEIR HOMES AND GATHERED IN IZUMO. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THIS COMES FROM EITHER KANNAMEZUKI, THE MONTH BEFORE THE GREAT HARVEST FESTIVAL, OR KAMINANZUKI, THE MONTH FOR THE NEW BREWING OF ALCOHOL. LONG AGO, PEOPLE WOULD CHEW GRAIN AND THEN SPIT IT OUT, USING THE AMYLASE IN SALIVA TO BREAK THE SUGARS DOWN AND CREATE ALCOHOL. THE HEAD OF IZUMOTAISHA'S PANTHEON IS ŌKUNINUSHI ŌKAMI, WHO IS SAID TO HAVE GIVEN THE COUNTRY TO THE FOUNDER OF THE IMPERIAL LINE, NINIGINO-MIKOTO. BUT IT IS THOUGHT THAT THIS IS A MYTH THAT DESCRIBES THE CHANGE IN POWER WHEN THE COUNTRY OF IZUMO LOST TO THE YAMATO EMPIRE. WHY THE LOSER WOULD BECOME A DEITY KNOWN FOR MATCHMAKING IS A MYSTERY, BUT IN JAPAN, PEOPLE THAT DIED UNPLEASANT OR UNHAPPY DEATHS ARE OFTEN TREATED AS GODS IN ORDER TO KEEP THEM FROM BECOMING VENGEFUL SPIRITS. KYOTO'S KITANOTENMANGU IS A SHRINE THAT WORSHIPS SUGAWARA MICHIZANE, BUT MICHIZANE LOST THE BATTLE FOR POWER TO THE FUJIWARAS AND WAS SENT TO DAZAIFU, WHERE HE PASSED AWAY. AFTER HE DIED, STRANGE OCCURRENCES LIKE HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES DYING ONE AFTER THE OTHER, LIGHTNING HITTING THE SEIRYŌ-DEN OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE, AND THE DEAD RISING MADE THE EMPEROR FEAR THAT MICHIZANE HAD TURNED INTO ONE SUCH SPIRIT, AND THUS HE BEGAN TO WORSHIP HIM AS A GOD.

THE IDEA HERE IS THAT IF A VENGEFUL SPIRIT IS POWERFUL AND CAN BE MADE INTO AN ALLY, IT WILL HAVE SOME KIND OF ACTUAL EFFECT IN THE REAL WORLD. IN THE BOOK, TŌKAIDŌ YATSUYA KAIDAN, THE BOULDER WORSHIPPING ŌIWAINARI TAMIYA SHRINE, IS KNOWN FOR ITS ABILITY TO PROMOTE MARITAL BLISS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE KIFUNE SHRINE IN KYOTO, FAMOUS FOR MATCHMAKING AND FOR RAIN-CALLING, IS ALSO FAMOUS FOR ITS USHI-NO-KOKU VISITATIONS.

AT THE USHI-NO-KOKU (THIRD HOUR AFTER MIDNIGHT), IF ONE CURSES A STRAW DOLL OR OTHER FIGURE BY NAILING IT TO THE SHRINE'S SACRED TREE, IT IS SAID THAT ONE'S CURSE WILL COME TRUE. ONCE, IN A BOOK I WAS LOOKING AT, I WAS SHOCKED TO SEE A WOMAN'S PICTURE NAILED TO A TREE AT KIFUNE. IT WAS LIKELY MEANT TO CURSE A RIVAL IN LOVE, AND SUCH A SIGHT IS NOT UNCOMMON IN JAPAN WHERE THE IDEA OF MATCHMAKING AND MATCH-BREAKING EXIST.

UNLIKE PRESENT DAY, IN A TIME WHEN WOMEN WERE ECONOMICALLY WEAK AND THEIR LIVES WERE MADE OR BROKEN BASED UPON THEIR MARRIAGE, THE SINGLE GREATEST WISH FOR MOST OF THEM WOULD HAVE BEEN TO MAKE A GOOD MATCH. BUT THEY SAY WHEN ONE IS CURSED, TWO GRAVES ARE DUG. THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE EMOTIONALLY HEALTHIER IF THE EFFECTS OF SHRINES WERE USED FOR WHOLESOME REASONS, WOULD IT NOT?

落雷乱子

THE REASON TOKYO UNIVERSITY IS KNOWN COMMONLY AS THE "RED GATE" IS BECAUSE THE MAIN CAMPUS IS THE FORMER MAIN MANSION OF THE KAGA HAN'S MAEDA FAMILY, AND THE GATE FOR IT IS STILL THERE. THE GATE IS PAINTED RED AND WAS BUILT ON THE GROUNDS OF THE GOSHU-DEN WHERE THOSE DAUGHTERS OF THE SHOGUN WHO HAD MARRIED HIGH-RANKING DAIMYO LIVED. THE WORD GOSHU-DEN IS ALSO USED TO REFER TO SUCH A WOMAN.

TOKYO UNIVERSITY'S RED GATE WAS BUILT BY THE 12TH HEAD OF THE KAGA HAN, MAEDA NARIYASU, IN HONOR OF THE MARRIAGE TO THE 11TH SHOGUN OF THE BAKUFU, TOKUGAWA IENARI'S 21ST DAUGHTER, YASUHIME. IENARI HAD 26 SONS AND 27 DAUGHTERS—A TOTAL OF 53 CHILDREN. TOKUGAWA IEYASU HAD 11 BOYS AND 5 GIRLS WITH ABOUT 10 MORE ILLEGITIMATE ONES RUMORED, BUT THAT STILL ONLY PUTS HIS BROOD AT HALF OF IENARI'S.

MANY OF THE EDO PERIOD'S SHOGUNS WERE SAID TO BE WEAK. WHILE THE FOOD THAT THEY ATE WAS QUALITY FOOD, THE STUDY OF NUTRITION WAS NOT YET IN EXISTENCE, SO EVEN A NUMBER OF FAMOUS SHOGUNS SUFFERED PROBLEMS FROM THE LACK OF VITAMIN B. IENARI LOVED HAKUGYUURAKU, WHICH IS A FOOD SIMILAR TO CHEESE OR BUTTER AND IS MADE BY BOILING MILK UNTIL ALL THE WATER IS GONE, LEAVING A PASTE.

THIS HAKUGYUURAKU WAS ALSO FREQUENTLY EATEN BY THE MITOKOUMON, TOKUGAWA MITSUKUNI. MITSUKUNI IS KNOWN IN JAPAN FOR BEING THE FIRST PERSON TO EAT RAMEN, BUT IT SEEMS THAT HE ALSO TRIED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FOODS AND IS CONSIDERED LONG-LIVED FOR HIS TIME PERIOD. FOR A SAMURAI DURING THE EDO PERIOD, ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF DEATH WAS LIVER FAILURE DUE TO COPIOUS ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

IT IS SAID THAT DURING A TOUR OF NAGASAKI, THE SUMO RAIDENEMON DRANK 2 TŌ (ABOUT 36 LITERS) OF SAKE DURING A DRINKING CHALLENGE WITH THE CHINESE SCHOLAR AND HEAVY DRINKER CHIN KEISAN. THE ALCOHOL CONTENT BACK THEN WOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT HALF OF WHAT IT IS TODAY. IT IS SAID THAT TAIHOU AND KITANOUMI COULD DRINK ONE TŌ, SO RAIDEN'S TWO TŌ IS A BELIEVABLE NUMBER. NO MATTER THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL CONTENT, DRINKING EVERY DAY WITHOUT PAUSE AND NOT DEVELOPING LIVER PROBLEMS IS JUST STRANGE. IT SEEMS, THOUGH, THAT IENARI WAS ALSO STRONG WHEN IT CAME TO ALCOHOL. IENARI DRANK, ATE HAKUGYUURAKU, AND HAD 53 CHILDREN. HE MIGHT THUS BE CONSIDERED A SPECIAL BREED OF EDO-ITE. HE ALSO EVIDENTLY ENJOYED GINGER.

THERE WAS EVEN AN ENTIRE FIELD DEDICATED TO PROVIDING GINGER TO THE SHOGUN HOUSEHOLD. GINGER HAS DIGESTIVE AID AND IMMUNITY-BOOSTING PROPERTIES, SO IENARI ATE GINGER WITH ITS CLEANSING PROPERTIES AND A FOOD THAT HAD ANIMAL PROTEIN EVERY DAY WHILE PUTTING LARGE EFFORTS INTO CHILD-MAKING. HE IS ALSO SAID TO HAVE ENJOYED AN ANTI-IMPOTENCY DRUG CALLED KAIKUJIN MADE FROM THE GENITALS OF SEALS.

WHILE IENARI DID HIS BEST TO BE PROLIFIC, DUE TO THE LESS ADVANCED MEDICINE OF THE TIME, A FAIR NUMBER OF HIS CHILDREN DIED QUITE YOUNG. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE NUMBER, A FAIR FEW SURVIVED TO ADULTHOOD, IRONICALLY LEADING TO INHERITANCE ISSUES AND POWER STRUGGLES THAT WOULD LATER INFLUENCE THE ANTI-SHOGUNATE MOVEMENT.

THE IDEA THAT NOBILITY HAS A DUTY TO HAVE CHILDREN IS SOMETHING COMMON TO CULTURES ACROSS THE WORLD. HOWEVER, IN IENARI'S CASE, HIS EXCESSIVE DEDICATION TO HIS DUTY MAY BE SEEN AS A SPECIFIC TYPE OF JINBARI. IENARI'S LAST CHILD—THE 27TH DAUGHTER—WAS BORN WHEN HE WAS 54. GIVEN THE AVERAGE LIFE SPAN OF THE PERIOD, HE WAS HAVING CHILDREN INTO WHAT TODAY WOULD BE HIS SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES.

HARE, KE, AND THE OLDEST PROFESSION

IN JAPAN, THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF THOUGHT: HARE AND KE. ON HARE DAYS, PEOPLE WEAR SPECIAL CLOTHING, EAT FOOD THEY NORMALLY WOULDN'T (SEKIHAN, MOCHI, AND FISH SERVED ON A PLATTER WITH HEAD AND TAIL), AND FESTIVALS MAY BE HELD. BECAUSE IT IS A SPECIAL DAY, SOCIETY'S NORMAL RULES ARE OFTEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN OR GIVEN MORE LENIENCY.

IF YOU READ OLD RECORDS, IT IS WRITTEN THAT IN MANY AREAS OF JAPAN FROM TOKYO TO OKAYAMA AND FURTHER, ON FESTIVAL NIGHTS SEX WITHOUT CONSIDERATION AS TO WHETHER THE PERSON WAS MARRIED OR UNMARRIED OFTEN OCCURRED. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE JUDGED FROM TODAY'S STANDARDS. FESTIVALS WERE MEANS AS A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO LET OFF THE STEAM BUILT UP IN EVERYDAY LIFE. PEOPLE NEED TO ESCAPE FROM SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS OCCASIONALLY OR THEY CAN SUFFER MENTALLY.

EVEN TODAY, THERE'S A FLOOD OF BABIES BORN 10 MONTHS AFTER THE CARNEVALE IN RIO ENDS DUE TO THE EXCITEMENT AND FRENETIC ENERGY BROUGHT ABOUT FROM THE DANCING. IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD, THESE CELEBRATIONS HAVE THE ABILITY TO TURN EVERYDAY LIFE UPSIDE DOWN. FURTHERMORE, EAST ASIA HAS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT VIEW OF MARRIAGE THAN THE WEST DOES.

FOR EXAMPLE, CHINA'S CONFUCIUS HAS AN IMAGE AS THE ORIGINATOR OF "HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER", BUT IN HIS WRITINGS HE RARELY MENTIONS THEM—IT IS ONLY IN SHI BASEN'S SHIKI KOUSHI SEIKA (CHRONICLES: THE LIFE OF CONFUCIUS) THAT THEIR NAMES ARE SAID TO BE KOU SHAKURYO AND GAN BIZAI, BUT THERE IS NO CORROBORATION FOR THIS IN ANY OTHER WRITINGS OF THE TIME PERIOD. CONFUCIUS HIMSELF MAY BEEN A YAGŌ—A CHILD BORN OUTSIDE A FORMAL MARRIAGE.

CONFUCIUS WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN RAISED BY HIS MOTHER, SUPPOSEDLY A PRIESTESS OR SHAMAN WHO WOULD HAVE OVERSEEN FUNERALS, DIVINED THE FUTURE, AND CALLED THE RAIN. IN FACT THE FIRST CHARACTER FOR CONFUCIANISM, JYU, MEANS ONE WHO SUMMONS RAIN. THERE ARE MANY REFERENCES WITHIN THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS TO FUNERARY RITES, AND ONE OF HIS FIRST PUPILS EARNED MONEY BY PERFORMING SUCH RITES, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN WHERE BELIEFS REGARDING HIS PARENTAGE COME.

WITHIN THE OLDEST KNOWN WRITTEN HISTORY, HISTORIAE, THE AUTHOR HERODOTUS DESCRIBES A CURIOUS TRADITION OF THE BABYLONIAN TEMPLE OF MYRITA. HE WROTE THAT ALL WOMEN IN BABYLON HAD TO HAVE SEX WITH SOME UNKNOWN MAN ONCE IN THEIR LIFETIMES. WOMEN WHO DID WERE ABLE TO GO HOME, BUT THIS PRACTICE EVENTUALLY CHANGED, BECOMING A SPECIALIZED TRADE. THESE LADIES WERE KNOWN AS "TEMPLE WHORES."

WE CALL PROSTITUTION "THE OLDEST PROFESSION," BUT THIS TRAIT OF RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTION CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD. JAPAN'S LADIES OF THE NIGHT WERE ORIGINALLY MIKO (PRIESTESSES), WOMEN WHO でOFFERED UP SONG AND DANCE (MIKO-NO-MAI) AS PRAYERS. AT SOME POINT, THESE WOMEN LEFT THE SHRINES AND BEGAN TRAVELLING THE COUNTRY, TAKING MONEY IN EXCHANGE FOR PERFORMING THEIR SONGS AND DANCES. IN OTHER WORDS, THEIR JOBS CHANGED FROM RELIGION TO ENTERTAINMENT.

THE SHIRABYOUSHI WHO EXISTED FROM THE HEIAN PERIOD TO THE KAMAKURA ERA CAN ALSO BE PLACED IN THIS CATEGORY. THEY PERFORMED SONGS AND よDANCES WHILE DRESSED AS MEN. BUT THEY HAD ONE LARGE DIFFERENCE FROM TODAY'S PROSTITUTES. THEY WERE THE LOVERS OF MEN OF NOBLE STATURE, SUCH AS TAIRA KIYOMORI'S BELOVED MISTRESSES GIOU AND HOTOKE GOZEN, OR SHIZUKA GOZEN, FAMED FOR HER TRAGIC ROMANCE WITH MINAMOTO YOSHITSUNE.

KABUKI'S FOUNDER, IZUMO NO OKUNI, WAS ALSO ORIGINALLY A PRIESTESS WHO HAD LEFT IZUMOTAISHA TO PROMOTE IT BY PERFORMING HER DANCES. BECAUSE HUMANS DON'T GO INTO HEAT, BY DIVIDING LIFE INTO HARE AND KE, HOLY AND SINFUL, SEX HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN A SPECIAL MEANING. IT SEEMS LIKE FESTIVALS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUAL GOINGS-ON MAY OFFER SOME INSIGHT INTO THE STATE OF MAN.

THE WORD 'SADISM' GOT ITS BEGINNING DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, FROM THE MARQUIS DE SADE. WHILE 'MASOCHISM' CAME FROM THE AUSTRALIAN NOVELIST LEOPOLD VON SACHER MASOCH. AS WE COULD IMAGINE DUE TO THESE TWO BEING AUTHORS, THEY BOTH HELD RATHER REFINED TASTES PECULIAR TO THOSE WHO TEND TO HAVE AN ENLARGED CEREBRUM.

PSYCHOLOGIST ERICH FROMM, IN HIS BOOK, "RUNNING FROM FREEDOM," STATES THAT RATHER THAN MAKE A DECISION THAT LATER MAY LEAD TO AN UNDESIRABLE FUTURE, MAN WOULD RATHER LEAVE ALL DECISION-MAKING TO SOME AUTHORITY. DOGS FORM PACKS UNDER A LEADER, INSTINCTIVELY PREFERRING OBEDIENCE, AND MANKIND AS A SOCIETAL CREATURE MAY BE THE SAME WAY.

NOW, FROM THE TAISHO ERA UP UNTIL BEFORE THE WAR, ILLUSTRATIONS DEPICTING SCENES OF DOMINATION WERE POPULAR. ONE OF THE ARTISTS OF THESE PICTURES, ITOU SEIU, HAD A PHIMOTIC COMPLEX AND THUS WAS UNABLE TO HAVE SEX WITH A WOMAN. FINALLY HE UNDERWENT SURGERY, AND LOST HIS VIRGINITY AT 28. HOWEVER, HIS FANTASIES BY THIS TIME HAD BECOME SO BUILT UP THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED IN THE REAL THING.

IT ALSO SEEMS THAT THERE IS AN UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE NUMBER OF MEN WHO FIND MASTURBATION MORE PLEASURABLE THAN SEX. FROM THE TIME HE WAS YOUNG, SEIU, TOO, SHOWED GREAT CURIOSITY ABOUT SEX AND IT MAY BE FATE THAT LED HIS PICTURES TO BE BOTH WELL CONSTRUCTED AND HAVE A SADISTIC FEEL. SEIU'S PICTURES FIND THEIR ROOTS IN THE MUZAN-E POPULAR DURING THE BAKUFU AND MEIJI ERAS.

TSUKIOKA YOSHITOSHI AND OCHIAI YOSHIIKU ARE BOTH WELL KNOWN MUZAN-E ARTISTS. BOTH WERE THE PUPILS OF THE MOST FAMOUS UKIYO-E ARTIST AT THE END OF THE SHOGUNATE, UTAGAWA KUNIYOSHI. KUNIYOSHI WAS A FORWARD THINKING MAN WHO SOCIALIZED WITH PEOPLE SUCH AS WESTERN STUDIES SCHOLAR AND PAINTER WATANABE KAZAN, AND HE MADE USE OF ANATOMICAL STUDIES AS SEEN BY THE ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF THE SKULLS HE DREW AS WELL AS PERSPECTIVE IN SOME OF HIS WORKS.

HIS STYLE WAS ADOPTED BY HIS STUDENTS YOSHITOSHI AND YOSHIIKU, AS WELL AS BY KAWANABE KYOUSAI. OF THEM, YOSHITOSHI ESPECIALLY DOMINATED THE MUZAN-E SCENE, EVEN TAKING THE NAME "BLOODY YOSHITOSHI." HOWEVER, HE WASN'T JUST AN ARTIST OF POPULAR MEDIA, HE ALSO TAUGHT JAPANESE-STYLE PAINTERS SUCH MIZUNO TOSHIKATA, AND KABURIKI KIYOKATA AND IKEDA TERUKATA ARE COUNTED AMONG HIS "DESCENDENTS."

A FAN OF YOSHITOSHI, AKUTAGAWA RYUUNOSUKE WRITES ABOUT RELIGIOUS ARTIST YOSHIHIDE, WHO IS ORDERED TO DRAW A PICTURE OF HELL AND, WHEN HE SAYS THAT HE CANNOT DRAW A WOMAN BURNING TO DEATH ON A FLAMING OX CARRIAGE, MUST WATCH HIS DAUGHTER BURN. YOU CAN SEE WHERE HE WOULD BE A FAN OF YOSHITOSHI. OTHER FANS INCLUDE EDOGAWA RANPO, WHO HAD A VERY LARGE MUZAN-E COLLECTION.

BUT THE GREATEST YOSHITOSHI FAN MUST HAVE BEEN YUKIO MISHIMA. IN HIS QUASI-AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL CONFESSIONS OF A MASK, MISHIMA CONFESSES THAT HE WAS AROUSED BY GUIDO RENI'S SAINT SEBASTIAN. BECOMING AROUSED BY THE DEPICTION OF THE BOUND, ARROW-SHOT MARTYR'S DEATH IS ONE FORM OF MASOCHISM, AS YOU KNOW. MISHIMA KILLED HIMSELF BY HARA-KIRI.

THIS COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT MISHIMA BOTH DIRECTED AND STARRED IN THE FILM YUUKOKU, IN WHICH THE MAIN CHARACTER COMMITS SEPPUKU, ONE COULD SEE THAT EXTREME FORMS OF MASOCHISM MAY FIND THEIR ULTIMATE RELEASE IN SUICIDE.

MISHIMA ALSO WROTE THE PLAY MADAME DU SADE, BUT OVERALL IT SEEMS THAT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN AUTHORS WHO USE WORDS TO PRICK THEIR READERS' IMAGINATIONS AND S&M IS DEEP

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